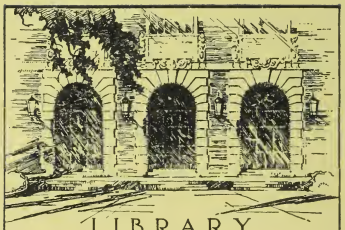

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MY PRIVATE NOTE-BOOK;

OR,

RECOLLECTIONS OF AN OLD REPORTER.

BY

W. H. WATTS.

AUTHOR OF "ODDITIES OF LONDON LIFE."

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PREFACE.

THE chief merit of the following "Sketches" is, that they are founded on fact. The author has thrown them into what he conceives to be a readable form, and he trusts his hope will not be found to be placed unreasonably high, that of affording half-an-hour or so of amusement to the reader.

The majority of these Sketches were published in the WEST-END EXAMINER, a local paper, established by the writer, with the object of somewhat lightening the heaviness of parochial topics. Their circulation was of course restricted, and therefore to the general public they will have the force of novelty.

October, 1862.

MY PRIVATE NOTE-BOOK;

OR,

RECOLLECTIONS OF AN OLD REPORTER.

CHAPTER I.

MUTUAL INTRODUCTION.

A CLOSE observer of human nature has left upon record as the result of his experience, that out of every man's life—from the peer to the crossing sweeper—if fairly written materials for instruction and amusement might be collected. Perhaps there is no class of men in the endless ramifications of society, whose existence is passed amid a greater variety of circumstances and situations than members of the press. As newspaper reporter—as editor, and as proprietor—the scene is constantly shifting—the incidents varying—the persons changing. I make this assertion from the best of all possible authority, personal experience—an experience extending over considerably more than thirty years.

Each of the three divisions I have indicated has its peculiar labours, responsibilities, and anxieties. It is something to have combined the three departments in one person, and to have felt the full force of the joys and sorrows of that tripartite position. Regarding the remark then with which I opened this chapter, as en-

titled to the weight of an axiom, I may, I hope, without presumption, be permitted to think that, in the course of a long and not unobservant connection with the public press, there have occurred a few incidents worth relating. Most people like to pry into the business of their neighbours—the curious public will possibly like to see just a corner of the curtain which shrouds the mysteries of the "fourth estate" lifted by a practical hand.

The duties of the "Reporter" are easily defined. His chief care, if he belongs to the "dismounted," is to collect full particulars of the striking incidents of the day, and to present them in such a form as will ensure common insertion in the morning journals, and a sufficient pecuniary return to himself. This brief description of a class will suffice. The "regular" reporter has higher aims, for which he requires higher educational qualifications. His greatest value is, perhaps, centred in his ability to report the parliamentary debates in scholarly style, and with scrupulous accuracy.¶ [I have gone through more than a quarter of a century of this life of hard, inadequately paid labour, and speak feelingly on the subject. The very few prizes that the press offers to its members, are not for the "reporter," whether regular or dismounted, and when his overtasked energies are exhausted by time or sickness—if all his resources are confined to the press, his fate is lamentable indeed. I could write a painful chapter on this theme; but this is not the medium through which public sympathy can be best enlisted.

As "Editor," the responsibilities become wider and

graver. The goal of my ambition when I joined the press, was the Editorial Chair. I found myself suddenly elevated to this position, and my eyes became disagreeably opened, not to my shortcomings—for the natural presumption of youth, and I fear, an amount of self-conceit which I mistook for ability, prevented my vision from being turned in that direction—but to the vast and illimitable difficulties that lay before me.

The mission which the press then modestly assumed to itself was merely to indicate public opinion—practically, I found it created, guided, and controlled public opinion. Questions of the highest social and political importance, all of which I had settled in my own mind, in a summary way, now presented themselves in a totally different and unexpected aspect. I saw the enormous power for good or evil that vested in the editorial "We." I saw the necessity of caution in advocating principles which were the watchwords of my own party, and of forbearance in opposing the views and principles of opponents. I discovered that one side was not all right—the other not all wrong. I found it was essential in one who honestly determined to pursue the right rather than the expedient, to examine questions involving important political and social changes and consequences carefully on all sides; to master the true principles of a constitution, much talked about, but little understood, before committing myself to extreme opinions. I knew that editorial labors were severe; but this was an addition I had not previously taken into account. I have perhaps had something to do in helping the public towards a decision

on some of the highest questions of the day; whether I have played my part wisely or well is a personal matter, in which the public at large is not likely to take any very absorbing interest, and respecting which I should hesitate to give a candid opinion.

My editorial elevation was not wholly barren of results. It satisfied me that a thoroughly qualified editor must be a kind of *lusus naturæ*. It enabled me to discriminate between the Brummagem pilferer of other men's ideas—the mere pourer out of one vessel into another—and the sterling and well informed writer. It filled me with feelings of astonishment at the little information the public cared to possess of the small value of the first class of our public instructors; it inspired me with boundless respect and admiration for the last. In Johnson's tale of the "Happy Valley," the philosopher Imlac enumerates the qualities which go towards making a poet. His catalogue of indispensible accomplishments is so extensive, that Prince Rasselas, in despair, exclaims, "Then I am satisfied that no mortal can become a poet." When I think of all that is, or ought to be, required of an "Editor," I am almost tempted to repeat the exclamation of Rasselas. One mortal mind seems incapable of possessing the omniscience of a *perfect* editor.

But it may be asked, do I intend to ignore the consummate ability which distinguishes some of our leading journals. By no means. One mind may be so gifted as to be able to give tone and influence to a journal; but the real power is created by an association of kindred minds—by departmenting subjects, and entrusting

them to the ablest hands, thus producing that perfect result of journalism which is not found out of the British Empire. If an aspirant for press laurels wishes to test his capabilities, let him measure himself in an article *currente calamo* on one of the passing topics of the day, against a leader in one of the high-class journals. We will bet long odds that, let his conceit be ever so great, it will take the best portion of it out of him.

I suspect my notions on this head will be quizzed by certain "fast" editors of this new era in newspaper history; but it must be understood I write of times before their advent was possible.

The last division, that of "proprietor," may be dismissed in a few words. It is a position of almost unmixed anxiety. Popular favour is somewhat capricious; that which is a property one day, may become a source of loss the next. Recent legislation has something to answer for in this respect. It is only the long purse that can tide over this state of things. Enough of this, and now for my reminiscences in the character of Reporter.

Having, I trust, properly introduced myself to my readers, without further preface, I shall begin my "Extracts from my Private Note Book."

CHAPTER II.

MARLBOROUGH STREET POLICE MAGISTRATES.

THIRTY years ago I first took my place as Marlborough-street "comic" police reporter of the *Morning Herald*, on

the bench usually allotted to the press. At that time Mr. Wight, the well-known author of "Mornings at Bow-street," had just given up his engagement, to take sub-editorial duties, and casting about for a successor —the humourous portraitures of actual life from police-courts then furnished the distinguishing feature, if not the main cause of the great success, of the *Morning Herald*—eventually made his selection in my favour. I was duly installed, at the then handsome stipend of five guineas weekly, to "dress up" cases in the "humourous" line for the special delectation of *Morning Herald* readers.

Thirty years ago this police-court and its arrangements were upon a totally different footing to that on which they now stand. The court was not, as now, held on the first floor of the private house in Great Marlborough-street, known as the police-office; it was located on the ground floor, the front room being appropriated to the magistrates as their private room; and the back premises fitted up with bench, bar, and seats, so as to give something like the semblance of a place where justice was decently administered.

As the court and its avenues were comparatively limited in extent, it frequently occurred that every part became inconveniently crowded whenever cases of weight and importance were brought to the office—and such was the reputation of the magistrates, and such the expertness and experience of the officers attached to the court, that a larger proportion of celebrated charges found their way to this locality than to any other of the police-courts—Bow-street, the chief office, not excepted. In-

deed, the Marlborough-street police-court has always kept up its reputation for what, in reporters' language is known as "good" cases. The jurisdiction has something to do with this—the Marlborough-street district embracing those parishes in which the leading tradesmen of the nobility chiefly reside, in which the principal hotels and clubs are situated, and in which night houses, hells, and "cracksmen's" cribs were at one period most abundantly found. From these sources, the *best* cases, estimating them by their magnitude, popular interest, and the position of the parties concerned, were sure to emanate. Again, a very large portion of "country business" was brought to the court, in consequence of the special employment of its officers, whose renown always stood deservedly high. Indeed, it is only necessary to name some few of its celebrities—for even among police officers of the old school, heroes in their way were not uncommon—to recall the sensation made by cases which have faded out of recollection, but which now form the most stirring portions of our criminal statistics.

Among the leading officers are to be named Plank, Foy, Goddard, Schofield, Ballard, Craig, and Clements, all of whom were, more or less, noted for qualities somewhat higher than possessed by the common class of thief-takers. In the course of these pencillings, I shall have to bring under review some of their exploits, and this will enable our readers—and we hope their name is legion—to judge whether their reputation was or was not well merited.

The prisoners' room, in which prisoners waited their turn for examination, was at the bottom of the passage

leading to the court—a most inconvenient arrangement; the clerk's office was just beyond the prisoners' room; and at the end of a paved alley, were situated the principal cells—one unusually strong, for cases of murder and other capital felonies. This cell has a dark but deeply interesting history all its own. But as it frequently occurred that the "drunk and disorderlies," especially on Mondays, were too numerous to be accommodated in the range of cells beyond the office, there were some three or four additional cells improvised out of the coal and wine cellars belonging to the private house; and in these dens—they were literally dens in size and appearance—scores of offenders were crammed, principally women—in summer enduring the tortures of the Calcutta Black Hole, constantly raving for air and water—in the winter experiencing Siberian severities, and frequently so benumbed by cold as to be obliged to have assistance to enable them to mount the stairs in order to reach the prison van.

For years this disgraceful condition of things existed. The press in vain exposed its scandals; the Home Office would do nothing; the plea put forward was economy, but the general belief was that it arose from the opposition of a nobleman whose mansion abutted on the precincts of the court, and who would not consent that a new and suitable edifice should be built on the ample space denominated the garden, as it would thereby overlook his study, and otherwise interfere with his private comfort and convenience. Be that as it may, the worst part of the case—the position and condition of

the prisoners' cells—has, at last, been remedied, though tardily, and, we fear, grudgingly. The court, now held on the first floor, is still, as far as public convenience is concerned, a discredit to the metropolis, and a scandal to the Home Office.

Nor are the general arrangements of the court the only changes that have occurred. The magisterial system has also undergone material modification. Thirty years ago, it was necessary to have a jury of two or three magistrates to decide cases of assault and some peculiar classes of cases. There were then three paid magistrates attached to each court; and as two magistrates attended in the daily *rota*, whenever it was necessary to have a third, one of the "unpaid" was always found at hand to discharge the duty.

CHAPTER III.

A TRIO OF MAGISTRATES.

The magistrates, at the time I am writing of, were Mr. Dyer, Mr. Conant, and Mr. Chambers. Of the three regular magistrates at that period, Mr. Dyer, Mr. Conant, and Mr. Chambers, it will be necessary to say a few words, and to give a few distinctive touches so as to bring them vividly before our readers.

Mr. Dyer may be regarded as presenting the beau ideal of an English police magistrate, in person and in qualification. He had filled the office of judge in one of the colonies before he was appointed to the metro-

politan magisterial bench, and to the last carried with him a strong spice of judicial bearing, of forensic etiquette and decision.

Tall, erect, stately as a courtier of the Louis Quatorze period, with dignified bearing and courteous manner, it was impossible to surprise him into anything resembling an exhibition of warmth of temper. His bald and venerable appearance, his hale aspect, firm lips, severe eyes, and terse language, added to fastidiously neat attire, at once indicated the character of the man, and the externals of the judge. It seemed impossible to drive him by any species of insult or obstinacy from his cold and impassive demeanour—though, sometimes, the deepened glow on his cheek would show that the inner man was deeply stirred, and only restrained by habit and principle from showing that such was the fact.

On one occasion, however, it must be confessed, he was surprised out of his usual placidity, and for a moment showed that under the cold exterior warm and lively passions existed.

One busy morning, while in the midst of an important investigation, a carriage drove up to the court, and a lady, in extreme distress of mind, was ushered into the private room. Sending an urgent message by a powdered lacquey for an immediate interview with the sitting magistrate Mr. Dyer, who was noted for his polite attention to ladies, and whose predilections were not altogether unbiassed by wealth and position, instantly laid down his pen, left the case before him only partly heard, and proceeded with Plank, the chief officer,

to his private room, where he found a stout jewel-bedizened lady in an agony of tears. "Oh, sir!" she exclaimed, as soon as she was informed that a magistrate was present, "Pray advise me, pray help me—my darling Julius is dying—poisoned—poisoned."

"Calm yourself, madam," said Mr. Dyer. "Tell me, do you suspect any one?"

"I do indeed; I suspect Sir Frederick's man. No one was allowed but Cook to prepare the victuals of my darling—no one to feed him but myself and the governess. I have proof with me of poison. Here, John, bring in the remains of dear Julius's supper."

The footman brought in a Sevres china bowl, containing portions of pap-like food, which certainly did look as if adulterated with some kind of deleterious compound.

"There is the bowl; I have shown it to Sir James Clark, and he is quite of opinion that poison is one of the ingredients, but, oh! he positively refused to prescribe, though he said the sufferer had not half an hour to live."

"Should death ensue," said Mr. Dyer, "a coroner's inquest will, no doubt, bring out all the facts."

"Oh! can a coroner's inquest be held on dear Julius? I was told it was impossible. I did not think it could be done. It shall certainly be held then."

"I presume the victim is your son?"

"My son! my dear sir—not exactly my son; though I may say quite as dear to me as one of my own children. The poor dear is in the carriage; you shall see him. John! bring in the bassinette."

The magistrate looked rather perplexed, but seemed to have a doubtful glimmering about the matter.

A superb bassinette was here brought in by the footman, whose countenance wore as much concern as if he were first mute at a funeral; and on the blue satin cover being withdrawn, there was seen on a satin pillow, in all the rigidity of moribund passiveness—a Blenheim *puppy!*

The magistrate jumped up, and, in a voice that was heard throughout the police-court, said "Madam, have you dared ——," but checking himself suddenly, and resuming his usual calmness, added, "Plank, show the lady to her carriage," stalked out of the room.

It was remarked that throughout the day the worthy magistrate was not himself. This was the only instance in which I ever discovered that his equanimity was in the least degree disturbed.

Mr. Conant had nothing, as far as exterior was concerned, to indicate the police magistrate. There was a striking contrast in deportment and in forensic conventionalisms betwixt him and his colleague, Mr. Dyer. He never affected to be legally or morally sententious, or to give out what culprits call a "wigging." His decisions were to the point, seldom including anything beyond a brief statement of the charge and the sentence. Not that this magistrate was unable to deliver a "set" judgment. He showed, on several occasions, that he could not only give a masterly analysis of evidence, but a complete view of all its legal bearings. Fauntleroy's forgery case may be instanced as one proof of the ability with which he could seize the salient points of a case,

and bring the law to bear directly upon it, notwithstanding the eminent legal minds arrayed in opposition against him.

But Mr. Conant had one remarkable peculiarity. He was absent-minded — especially in later years — appearing almost constantly in a state of abstraction while a case was being stated—only cases, however, of the least important character, such as begging or plying for hire. Mr. Conant would on such occasions be seen bending over his writing-pad in a self-centred mood, jotting down lines rapidly, and seemingly at random; now and then giving an abstracted look at the tenant of the bar and round the court. Plank, the chief officer, who knew his man, would on these occasions show how admirable the selection of the magistrates was in taking him for their favourite and confidential officer. A few pointed questions from that officer, who was allowed an unusual latitude by all the magistrates who occupied the bench in turn, would enable him to get out the main circumstances of the evidence and the defence, that he might recapitulate them to the magistrate. Plank, in fact, in some cases, from his innate shrewdness and knowledge of the worst part of the London world, was far more fitted to deal with charges applying to cadgers, pickpockets, and begging-letter writers, than even the most experienced magistrate.

"That's the case, sir," would Plank say, pulling off his spectacles with a peculiar jerk, and giving a slight rap on the magistrate's desk to draw Mr. Conant's attention.

"Oh, very well; remand the woman."

"It's a man, sir."

"Well, discharge the woman."

Plank: "It's the man's first offence. Only begging, sir." At the same moment giving an admonitory jerk with his glasses.

By this time Mr. Conant had fully collected his faculties, and, having made himself master of the case, would give prompt judgment.

When the pad, on which the magistrate had been apparently so busy, was examined, there would be found an admirable likeness of the beggar, or, perhaps, a clever pen-and-ink sketch of some well-known head from Guido or Titian. Mr. Conant was an amateur painter of no mean pretensions, and a devoted worshipper of the masters of the old school.

Mr. Chambers, the third magistrate, was, perhaps, in direct antithesis to both his colleagues. If Mr. Conant had little of the exterior which is conventionally attributed to magistrates, Mr. Chambers had less. Short, sturdy, rubicund, not very legal or polished in language or demeanour—indeed, his umbrella fracas with the coal merchant, Pope, was long remembered to his prejudice—he might be mistaken for a fair specimen of the country gentleman, fond of rural sports, and by no means averse to an occasional magnum of "old crusted port." But taken all in all, he was an excellent and a thoroughly conscientious magistrate. Brimfull of charity, his hand was always in his purse; scores of outcasts, brought shivering and trembling to this court, have found themselves suddenly provided with a fair start in the world.

Mr. Chambers used to assert that he had unlimited credit on the purse of a well-known charitable lady. This, no doubt, was true, but it was believed to be equally true that his own purse was never closed to the call of charity.

Mr. Chambers, with his rough and vigorous decisions, had also a spice of humour about him. Journeymen tailors, for instance, formed the staple of the Monday morning night-charges years ago. "Tell them off in *nines*," said the magistrate. This was done. "Now," said the magistrate, addressing them, "as nine of you make a man, I fine each lot five shillings."

The tailors were glad to put up with this skit on the fractional claim to humanity assigned to them, and each cheerfully paid the ninth part of the penalty.

Another specimen, and the last. A well-known sturdy mendicant—an incorrigible beggar—was brought, for the fiftieth time, before the bench.

"What, you here again?" said the magistrate, at once recognising him; "why, I let you off last time, on your solemn promise to give up your lazy trade."

"I'm hobligated to beg," whined the mendicant, "cos I ain't got no friends."

"No friends? why, I'll be your friend."

"I ain't got no lodging."

"I'll find you a warm, dry lodging."

"I ain't got no wittles."

"I'll provide you with three good meals daily."

"I ain't got no work."

"I'll find you plenty of work. Fourteen days to

the House of Correction, with hard labour; and it shall be a month every time you come here afterwards."

I have already stated that I first came to this court in the character of *comic* reporter. I may as well here say a few words here on the subject of a species of literary composition which has passed out of the hands of the press, and which has been taken possession of principally by serials.

Forty years ago, until about twenty years from the present day, the "humourous" delineation of *real* life was mainly confined to one or two newspapers. The writers of that day—the Purcells, the Hayneses, the Wights, the Conways, kind reader, will you add your very humble servant, and some half-dozen others, whose very names have gone out of recollection—undoubtedly laid the foundation of that peculiarly English kind of literature which Messrs. Thackeray, Dickens, and their legion of imitators have, for the last twenty years, rendered so widely popular. How far clever writers of this school have been indebted to the genius and style of humour of their less known predecessors might be a curious inquiry. It will not, however, be going too far to assert that forgotten humourous police delineations of character have furnished the "idea" for some of the most amusing and believed-to-be-original characters in some of the most popular works of our most popular comic authors.

It is somewhat singular that a kind of writing so generally attractive should have entirely dropped out of notice as far as newspapers are concerned. The press

has not been enlivened with a truly "humourous" police case for many a day. If the heaviness of politics and criminal charges has been diversified recently by light writing, it has been mainly through translations from certain foreign journals, founded unquestionably on the model of the English style of humourous reporting.

One reason why no comic cases are now to be seen in the newspapers may possibly arise, not so much from the indisposition of the proprietors to pay for this kind of literary matter, as from the fact that materials for humour are now more scanty than they were.

The march of education, the spread of cheap knowledge, the nearer approximation of classes, have worn away the old broad distinctive lines, and have obliterated or destroyed much of that rough originality which once constituted so large and so conspicuous a feature in what may be called the *individuality* of the lower orders of English society. Acts of Parliament have had something to do with this change by abolishing, or very much changing, the characteristic occupations of many special classes from which materials for humourous description could once be abundantly drawn. Where are the running dustmen, where the "charlies," where the "chummies," where the twenty-caped hackney-coach "jarvies?" They have disappeared, or, if they still exist, have merged into the common herd; and the sons of the present day have certainly lost much of the racy peculiarities of the sires of the past.

But perhaps it may be asserted that the constant

influx of Irish, the countless increase of Irish-bred Londoners, who have displaced whole sections of English labour in the metropolis, and have secured whole districts to themselves, with their traditionary and popularly-admitted claim to superior wit, must have more than adequately filled up the gaps occasioned by causes which I have indicated.

It will surprise many—it will be doubted by more—the assertion that Irish generally are not witty, and have little appreciation of what constitutes true humour. I can conscientiously declare, during a twenty years' careful search after phases of originality and humour, in every department of society, that I never came upon a specimen of Irish humanity among the lower orders (at least the London Irish) who had the remotest pretension to *original* wit, or from whom I could derive directly one unborrowed, unadulterated, humourous idea.

It is quite true that, from Irish peculiarities, a good deal of humour may be drawn and *manufactured*, but I assert that humour does not exist in prominent form among the Irish in London to any appreciable extent. Let the experiment be made, and then the accuracy of my observation will be tested.

I know that my statement will very much irritate a class of Irish writers, who insist so constantly on the superiority of their countrymen over Englishmen in all matters of repartee and nimbleness of wit. All I can say is, that I have often had quoted against my theory specimens of *Irish* wit, which I have manufactured myself, and instances of *Irish* humour, which were

nothing more than stale London jokes reproduced with an Irish brogue.

Among our own lower orders, especially of London, an abundant fund of real wit and humour—of a coarse kind, it is true—is to be found; and in that species of comic combat called "chaff," a couple of cockney cabmen or omnibus drivers will utter more good things good-humouredly in an hour than a whole province of Irish hodmen in a year.

CHAPTER IV.

HOW I FIRST BECAME A "REPORTER."

I FANCY I plunged rather too plumply *in medias res*, when I commenced my press "recollections" at the period of receiving my appointment at Marlborough-street Police-court. The present, I think, is a good opportunity to state how, why, and by what means I came to adopt the press at all as a profession.

It will suffice to say that my original destination in life was mercantile. My father-in-law was a Portuguese merchant, a ship-broker, and an underwriter of Lloyd's, in all which vocations he destined me to be his successor. I was sent to a public school to learn commercial languages and commercial requisites; but instead of "useful" knowledge, I acquired a good deal of "useless" lumber, some Latin, some Greek, more geometry than algebra, and a strong notion that the bent of my "genius" was decidedly towards literature, not

commerce—a mistake that I never had cause to regret but once, and that once was during my whole life.

The hallucination I laboured under was very much fostered by the secret production of a tragedy, the plot and dialogue of which envious people might say were filched from Shakespeare; a melo-drama, which would afford ground for the belief that either Schiller had stolen from me or I from Schiller; a poem—the completion of Don Juan—a feat Byron was never able to accomplish; and a Scotch novel in three volumes, which somehow bore a remarkable resemblance in all but genius and originality to Scott's "Heart of Midlothian."

I venerated with profound veneration those immortal literary names, ancient and modern, which had enlightened and instructed the world. I thought the roll of fame, though crowded, yet contained room enough for *one* name more—that name only known to myself; might it not bye-and-bye resound throughout the whole area of civilization?

With qualifications such as I have indicated, it is no wonder that at twenty-two or thereabouts I determined that the world should be no longer in ignorance of the talents of a "certain person," and the channel I selected, through which to impart the secret, was the press. But then to make my way to editor or proprietor was a puzzling affair. I knew no one connected, directly or indirectly, with the press. This was a damper, to be sure; but at that happy period of life trifles of this sort had no formidable influence or weight.

I saw a way at once to overcome the difficulty; I

had only to write to the known editors, enclose a specimen of, as yet, unrecognised genius, and an engagement, I felt assured, would promptly follow.

The chief difficulty was in the selection of that newspaper editor who was to be the fortunate possessor of my valuable assistance. I considered, however, in order to prevent jealousy among these touchy gentry, that the best way would be to write to them altogether, to state the facts candidly, and, at the same time, to hint that first-comer would be first served. I wrote letters—masterly in composition as I conceived, yet toned down with obvious modesty—to all the morning papers, and having seen them carefully posted, I waited a day or two with exemplary patience. The day or two stretched to a week, and I began to have a suspicion that neither proprietors nor editors of morning papers were entitled to that character for ready discrimination which they enjoyed by popular consent.

I resolved to give the evening papers a turn. Letters were accordingly sent round, but no replies were vouchsafed. The last letter was to the *Courier*, then on the wane of its popularity, though once the co-partner in some respects, in others rival of, the *Times;* once the organ of eager politicians, who scrambled during the war—so the rumour goes—for early copies of second editions at the rate of half-a-guinea each.

Another week passed, and all hope had nearly fled. I was about condemning summarily the whole batch of press men, evening and morning, as unqualified blockheads and envious monopolisers, when a letter was put

into my hand which changed my views in a twinkling. It was a letter from the *Courier* office, couched in the kindest and most familiar terms, apologising for unavoidable delay in answering my note, inviting me to come to the Strand any day after four o'clock, ask for the editor, and to prepare to name the department I was desirous of filling on the paper. The letter was signed "Eugenius Roche."

Feeling now satisfied that true merit could not be wholly overlooked, even in that degenerate age, I made my way quickly to the *Courier* office, and on sending in my card, was instantly ushered into a back room, where sat a tall spectacled, benignant-looking gentleman. As soon as I presented myself, he rose with a stare of unmistakeable astonishment. He looked at my card—he looked at me.

"Jonathan Potts," said he; "why really—are you the gentleman who wrote to me, and who sent me in this card?"

"I am," said I, rather, as the phrase of the day went, dropping down on my luck at this interrogation.

"Bless me, bless me!" said he; "what an absurd mistake. I thought it was one of my oldest and dearest friends, one of the oldest contributors to the press, who had written to me. Your name and his name are precisely similar. You must have been very much astonished at the free-and-easy style of letter you received."

"I certainly was pleasantly surprised," I said, "but having been almost reduced to despair, the sensation

was too agreeable to be discarded at the time. I had written so many letters in vain, and hoped against hope so long, that your letter was doubly welcome, and I can hardly express to you the extent of my present disappointment."

"Well, well," said he, with that amiability which distinguished him throughout his literary career, "perhaps the disappointment may not turn out to be so thorough as you anticipate. What can you do?"

"I'm afraid," said I, modestly, "very little. I have had no press experience yet."

"Ah," said he, shaking his head, "that's unlucky, and I am afraid I shall be able to do nothing for you. The *Courier* only makes use of the services of experienced hands. Can you report?"

"I don't think," said I, "that I am quite, though very nearly, in the position of the bumpkin, who, when asked if he could play on the fiddle, replied he did not know, as he never had tried. I have never reported, but I think I could report if I tried."

"There, again," said he, "only experienced reporters can hope for employment on the *Courier*. All I can promise is, if you send anything that can fairly be inserted, I will promise you a trial."

With this opening I was bound to be satisfied. I thanked him warmly, took my leave, and as I shall, perhaps, have occasion to mention, earned my first guinea on the press through this introduction.

CHAPTER V.

THE "PENNY-A-LINER."

A QUARTER of a century ago, although the "press" was then, unquestionably, a "great fact," it was not the vast power it confessedly now is. To the conductors of, and contributors to, the press a quarter of a century ago, are undoubtedly due the merit of having conferred on it the *status* and the influence progressively acquired, a status and influence which unquestionably the press, although in a transition condition, still enjoys.

Now-a-days the press is no mystery. "Gentlemen of the press" are as common and plentiful as mushrooms. The case was a little different twenty-five years ago. There was no lack of contributors of all grades even at that bygone-generation epoch, but they were not bodily before the public eye; indeed, a retiring feeling, not arising, however, from superfluous modesty, was, in a certain sense and extent, the press characteristic, possibly because the profession was one of doubtful and as yet unrecognised position.

The "press" with the "mob" was a sort of abstraction. Everybody either felt or admitted the moral and positive influence which it everywhere exercised—the practical force with which it operated on public affairs and opinion—but very few seemed to have any clear notion of its whereabouts, its personality, or its material existence.

Now and then an "editor," as a sort of *lusus*

naturæ, might be pointed out at some public festival, or his bodily presence discovered, as the "lion" at some out-of-the-way tavern; while "reporters," during session of Parliament especially, might be commonly seen in batches on the back benches of the then unreformed House of Commons, and in the small publics adjacent; but, beyond these tangible evidences of actual existence, it was a difficult problem for the public at large to solve how newspapers were got up daily, and where were to be found the labourers in that mysterious and not over-productive vineyard.

It is not my purpose just yet to speak of editors or reporters either of the past or present school. I propose to bring before my readers a class of contributors quite as indispensible as either of the two constituent parts of a daily newspaper, and twice as popular. I refer to the "penny-a-liner"—the unit of a race *sui generis;* not, however, the penny-a-liner of the existing time, but of the particular period to which I have already referred.

The profitable business of "penny-a-lining" — a misnomer, however, for the general scale of payment in the palmy days of the press was three-halfpence per line for town matter, twopence for country—had become a kind of monopoly. It was in comparatively few hands, but those hands belonged to men, several of whom were of the highest order of intellect and possessors of varied attainments. Some of these "outsiders" preferred the independence, the ease, and the profits of their position, to regular engagements; others adhered to "lining,"

because whiskey-toddy, porter, tobacco, and freedom, had attractions too potent for their idiosyncracies. About half-dozen first-rate men, who had the monopoly of the papers, carefully guarded every avenue from interlopers; they mapped out amongst themselves the various departments and districts, and it was a point of honour not to poach on any part of the recognised fraternity's allotted manor.

The "dismounted," as they were facetiously termed, held their nocturnal gatherings at the "Ben Jonson," in Shoe-lane.

Turning from Fleet-street into Shoe-lane, you come upon a dingy public-house down a short passage; this is still the "Ben Jonson," but, alack! not the thriving "Ben Jonson" of former years.

The renown once conferred upon this public-house as the recognised head-quarters of the press attracted all the respectability of the ward. The aldermen, the deputy, and leading common councilmen, might be nightly seen among the guests. They were glad to hear the latest intelligence of the latest murder, the freshly delivered Old Bailey verdict, and the numbers on a division which had just put Ministers out of office, and all in anticipation of the morning papers.

I ask you to fancy a room about twenty feet long by twelve feet wide, with a mahogany table down the centre, closely packed wooden chairs on each side, at the top a raised arm-chair, the seat of honour, for years occupied by a Ludgate-hill watchmaker, and in one corner a small square table, exclusively reserved for the

"liners" on which to write their "special" or their "flimsy" reports, respecting which I must explain the difference. A "special" report was where an outsider had been engaged by the editor to forage out the particulars of, say, a fire, murder, or execution, exclusively for a settled sum. A "flimsy" report was where the outsider preferred to write, by the aid of manifold, as many copies as there were papers, taking payment at so much per line for as much as the editor might choose to use. For "good business," such as "Murders," "Forgeries," "Love and Suicides," this latter mode of contribution is, or rather was, by far the most profitable. Take, for instance, such cases as John Thurtell's, for the murder of Weare, of Corder, for the murder of Maria Martin in the Red Barn, the murder and burning of the body of Paas, at Birmingham — events that horrified and interested our fathers—there the lucky penny-a-liner whose copy was preferentially used—for reports of such atrocities were done incomparably better by the penny-a-liners than by the regular reporters—would have little difficulty in netting his ten or fifteen pounds per diem, as long as the trial or his ingenuity made the interest last.

It was in this direction I resolved to make my first attempt. I thought it would be a good preparation for the higher journalistic departments. I liked the rollicking independence of the fraternity—I liked the prospect of superior profit; I did not then care for honour. I had paid several evening visits to the "Ben Jonson," and had formed a sort of conversational

acquaintance with one of the penny-a-lining fraternity, who seemed most accessible to invitations to eleemosynary ale and oysters, and who, mistaking me for one of the "young swells" who now and then come eastward to imbibe a few notions from the wise men of Shoe-lane, was obligingly communicative on all the *minutiæ* connected with his profession, conceiving, as a matter of course, that he was bound in honour to give a *quid pro quo* for the good cheer he was invited to partake of without being called upon to bear any part of the reckoning.

I watched for an opportunity for some time. One evening I alighted on a short paragraph in the *Morning Advertiser*, to the effect that a fisherman named Malcolm had been shot in the arm by a gentleman named Moir, and that, as death was anticipated, the event had created a great sensation in the neighbourhood. I thought this a good opportunity for a venture on my own account. Profiting by the information I had surreptitiously picked up from my bibulous friend, I went round late at night to the various papers, stating that I was going to Shelhaven the next morning, to inquire into the circumstances, and adding, that I proposed to send a full account if the facts were of sufficient importance. I received a conditional promise that my "copy" should be used if none of their "regular contributors" sent anything.

The next morning I set out on my first newspaper expedition. I shall not recount the difficulties—comic and serious—for I had abundance of both, which I

experienced before I could either find out the locality of the event or make my way to Shelhaven Creek. When I did arrive there, my labours were well rewarded. I found that the wounded man had just died, that Captain Moir was in custody, and that a coroner's inquest was fixed to take place the next Thursday. I put together a very readable account of the unhappy affair, which I wrote out in manifold for every paper, thinking that it would whet public curiosity for further details at the inquest. I reached town in good time to give all the papers copy for the next morning. Profiting by my knowledge of the "Ben Jonson" junta, I took the precaution of stating at the end of my report that the inquest was fixed, not for *Thursday*, which was the fact, but for *Friday*, a *ruse* of which I reaped the full benefit, as will be seen in the sequel.

The following morning, to my intense delight, while breakfasting at Peele's Coffee-house, I read, without missing a word in all the seven papers, my first report, in which I felt no doubt I had blended style, pathos, and fact together in a manner not altogether unworthy of the "Sensation School" of the present day. The next evening I was at the "Ben," and there also were the *clique* of "liners."

"Seen the 'Melancholy and Tragic Event' (so I had headed my paragraph) in the papers?" said one.

"Oh, yes, it's Tom Akland's."

"That be ——! (the cleverest gentlemen are not always the most refined in their language—this specially applies to gentlemen of the press) It isn't

a bit like Tom Akland's style. It's from the Essex yokel of the *Chelmsford Clodhopper*. Why, who but a yawnips that makes shoes one half the week and goes to case the other, would write this sort of country muck. 'But, alas! hope was doomed to disappointment—death, at last, putting an end to a week of mortal agony and protracted suffering.' Don't that smell of the cobbler, eh? But I see the inquest is on Friday. It will be worth going to."

"Oh, yes," said the liners, in chorus, "it's a joint-stock job; we'll all be in it."

I was a little nettled at the criticism on my first production. I attributed—no doubt correctly—the quiz on my "style" to sheer envy. I hoped, however, to have my modicum of revenge in good time.

On Thursday, accordingly, I was again at Shelhaven. No one from the press was present at the court but myself and the shoe-making representative of the *County Clodhopper*. The evidence was very long. Many will yet remember the unhappy case. Captain Moir, a gentleman of fortune, of warm temper, had shut up a path over his lawn to the river. A fisherman, named Malcolm, persisted in committing the trespass of crossing the lawn, though warned off by the Captain. The fisherman is believed to have used bad language to the irritated Captain, and to have declared that he would come back that way in the evening, in spite of prohibition to the contrary. The Captain went home, loaded a pair of small pistols (here was the strong part of the case, which afterwards hanged him), and on seeing the fisher-

man again crossing the lawn, rushed out, threw himself on his pony, and overtaking him, commenced an altercation, which ended by the Captain firing one of the pistols, and lodging a ball in the arm of the fisherman. The wound would not heal, inflammation set in, and the man died.

I had taken a heap of notes, when the county reporter made an arrangement with me to give his paper the conclusion for a couple of guineas, as he had to be back at Chelmsford at a stated hour. This was the first piece of unexpected good fortune. The jury returned a verdict of wilful murder; and after despatching a brief report to the county paper, I went to bed, resolving to write out fully for the daily papers the mass of evidence I had in my note-book. I rose early, reached Billericay in the morning, and took an outside place to London. About eleven o'clock, as I was passing through Ingatestone, I saw five familiar faces trudging up the road, dusty, hot, and footsore. I recognised them as my "Ben Jonson" critics, in full trot to the inquest.

After I reached London, six hours' hard writing enabled me to turn out a couple of columns of matter, every line of which, in that happy age of editorial jealousy and competition, was sure to be inserted and, what is better, paid for. Feeling particularly comfortable at the golden harvest before me, I made my way to the "Ben" about ten o'clock at night, and while indulging in the extravagance of a lobster and bottled ale my five gentlemen turned in, travel-stained, and rather out of temper.

"What a bloke that Chelmsford yokel was, to shove down Friday instead of Thursday for the inquest," said the leader. "If we hadn't known where to find Bartlett, the coroner, we should have looked precious spooney when we came back. Come, my lads, bring out the tools, and let's strap at it."

The five liners went to work busily for an hour, when one of them, gathering up the copy as far as it had been written, proposed, as it was late, to take it round, and tell the printers the remainder would soon follow. This was assented to, and he left, but returned in marvellous quick time, with a face of dismay.

"Knock off, my boys," said he. "We're all done dirty brown. Copy has been in to all the papers, and 'up,' these three hours."

"None of your gammon, Bob," said one of the writers, regarding the speaker with a suspicious look. "You won't 'suck the monkey' this time, I promise you."

The phrase contains a little bit of slang, well known at the Docks. It refers to the practice of inserting a straw in a pipe of wine, and sucking out its contents. The "liners" had adopted and applied it to cases where a breach of faith was committed—where one "liner" sucked out the contents of copy in common and sent it specially in his own name.

"I tell you," said the first speaker, "the copy is all in type—two columns at least. Lawson, of the *Times*, showed it me, and the name on the copy was 'Jonathan Potts.'"

My special friend here cast a scrutinising glance at

me, and then appeared as if he had a sudden revelation of light. He came and sat himself by my side.

"How do? We didn't see you here last night."

"No," said I, evasively; "I was a little way in the country."

"In the country, eh! Anywhere near Shelhaven?" said he.

"Why, yes," said I.

"Perhaps your name is Potts?"

"It is."

"D—— my sister's cousin's cat," said he, with great liveliness; "I thought so. What a blessed pump I've been! But, confound it! why didn't you give us the 'office' when you passed us at Ingatestone, for I'm sure it was you on the top of the coach, and not let us go tramping forty miles for nix, besides sticking up five 'bob' at the bar for expenses, to be paid out of what we got for our copy? You ought to pay your footing, and 'stand Sam,' especially as you'll make a £20 note by this job."

"Well," said I, "if it turns out as well you say, I'll pay your score, and put down half-a-sovereign for a beefsteak supper."

My friend communicated this piece of intelligence to his colleagues. They were obliged to be content with it; and when the supper came off the next night a solemn compact was entered into to admit me into their corps, share and share alike.

The *honourable* way this compact was carried out shall be described in my next.

CHAPTER VI.

SOME OF THE MYSTERIES OF PENNY-A-LINING.

Before I go on with my story, I may be permitted to say a few more last words respecting the mysteries of the penny-a-liner's vocation.

The old—and, I may add, the *aboriginal*—race of penny-a-liners were, taken in the lump, clever fellows. They were masters, or rather inventors, of the art of "dressing-up" paragraphs, so as to give them a character of speciality and interest. Their talent was not confined—as small writers in cheap publications of the day have ignorantly asserted—to the business of exaggerating the dimensions of "gigantic gooseberries," or, by taking thought, adding a cubit to the longitude of some "Patagonian cucumber." They were real geniuses in their way, and have, in their vocation, afforded the newspaper public many a hearty laugh, and many a pungent thrill, though through the agency of facts not always based on the soundest foundations.

The object of the "penny-a-liner" in discarding simple Saxon words, and using sesquipedalian polysyllables, was, not—as ignorantly asserted by authorlings not possessing a tithe of his real talent—to create or exhibit "false taste," but, really and truly, to add to honest gains. Being paid by the line, the great aim of the "liner" was to extend their number, by ingenious means, in an artistic manner. In the hands of a "regular" reporter, the details of a "tragic event" or

a "melancholy occurrence" would be given drily or succinctly. A penny-a-liner, handling the same matter, would, by the judicious application of verbal ornamentation, give the affair unexpected life and interest.

To illustrate my meaning, here are two reports of the same occurrence copied from the papers of the day. They are both reports of the same speech; one furnished by the "regular" of *The Times*, the other, manifolded for the rest of the papers, by the self-same Jack Holliday already referred to as my quondam friend.

I must first explain that the occasion was an election of common councilmen at one of the City wards. The elected was a cheesemonger, more remarkable for the quality of his goods, than the excellence of his oratory.

Times report:—

"Mr. Cheshire said he couldn't find words—he was no orator—but he thanked them all round; and, though he couldn't speak well, he could vote well. He was not worthy of the honour done to him; but they all knew him—he would do his best. They might find a better, but not an honester, man; and he wished them all the same success he had met with, and long life to enjoy it."

The "penny-a-liner" version, "spun out" and interjectionally interlarded for the benefit of his pocket—perhaps as accurate but not quite so literal—appeared in the other morning papers in this form:—

"Mr. Cheshire, on being unanimously called for by the electors, presented himself before them, and, bowing all round, with evident emotion, said: Fellow-wardsmen, friends, and fellow-parishioners, overpowered as I am by

the honour you have just conferred upon me in electing me your representative in the Common Council of the first commercial city in the civilized world, I cannot find suitable words in which to thank you. (Applause.) He did not pretend to oratory (Cries of 'So much the better'). He was no orator—but, from the bottom of his heart, he thanked them all round. (Cheers, and cries of 'Bravo, Cheshire!') Though he might not be able to speak well, yet he could vote well. (Renewed cheers.) He felt himself totally unworthy to fill the high position in which he had been placed. (Cries of 'No, no!') They all knew what he was. (A voice, 'You're a trump!') They all knew him. In the face of that respectable meeting of his constituents he solemnly pledged himself to do his best—his very best—for the common interests of the ward. (Cries of 'We know you will!') They might find a better man ('No, no!'), but they never should say they could find an honester representative. (Loud cheers.) In all sincerity he wished them all the same success as he had met with, and he fervently hoped, under Divine Providence, they would live long enough to enjoy it. The worthy common councilman here resumed his seat amidst general plaudits."

The seven lines of the "regular" was expanded into twenty-seven by the "liner."

I need not say that neither common councilman nor penny-a-liner had cause to regret the figure they made in the papers the next morning.

One of the greatest masters of verbal amplification was this renowned and once well known John, or familiarly

Jack, Holliday. The late Tom Haynes was a genius of the same school, but in a more cultivated and classical form. When quizzed, respecting the profuse sprinkling of "cheers" and "counter cheers," "hear, hear," and "applause," in his common council and civic reports, "My dear fellow," said he, "I pay for my tobacco with them." His confidential advice to me was, "Never, when writing manifold, use a *short* word where a *long* one—the longer the better—can be substituted, for it may *turn the line*."

From these brief hints it will be seen there was something in the "art" that must be learned, and which did not, like Dogberry's reading and writing, "come by nature."

The "captain" of the "liners" was one Tom Conroy. On him devolved the duty of apportioning the labour and the districts among those who worked in partnership. My special friend, Holliday, who evidently bore the "captain" no good will, one evening, under pressure of his sixth pint of Burton, whispered in confidence to me, "Take care of Tom, if ever you do any business with him; you'll find he's a —— rogue, and would sell his grandfather if he got a chance."

The opening of Staines Bridge, at which King William the Fourth was announced to be present, was the first business of sufficient importance to engage the attention of the coöperative "Ben Jonsonians." Accordingly, the "captain," finding there were four of us to be in it, allotted to each their parts, the profits of which were not to be shared in common, but in the

proportion to the amount of information each respectively contributed. This was the plan adopted on particular occasions, the prudence of which had been more than once experienced. My part in this business was to give an account of the royal procession as it set forth from Windsor Castle, and the general behaviour of the populace: this, I was assured, was particularly important, the whole country being then in arms in reference to the Reform Bill. I thought my portion of work rather meagre, but I did not complain, as it was the first transaction, and, accordingly, full primed with instructions, I made my way to the locality pointed out, a cross road between Windsor and Staines, by which the royal carriages were expected to pass. There might, perhaps, have been half-a-dozen people lounging about, but I soon saw I had been "sold," that, in fact, I should have nothing to describe, and that, very likely, I should be the expenses out of pocket, as the expenses were to be borne individually, and not to come out of the common purse. The conveyances to London were so few from this out-of-the-way locality, that I did not get to town until nearly ten o'clock. My first visit was to the "Ben," in no very placid humour. There sat the "captain" at the table, which was covered with manifold, already laid out, brimfull of expectation, and boiling with impatience and vexation at the delay.

"You the first here?" said he, gruffly, "you can't have got much. Did you tumble in with Tom Conroy and Jack Holliday?" my copartners, inquired he.

"I don't very well see how I could tumble over any

one, considering the ridiculous place you sent me to," said I, rather pettishly.

"Haven't you got anything?" said the "captain."

"Not a line worth writing," said I.

At this moment in staggered Tom Conroy.

"Missh'd the lasht coash, by shingo!" hiccupped he. "Couldn't shee Holliday till after peshession to Sthainsh wash all passhd. Left Snack at Windsher, drunk ash a fiddlersh—fiddlersh——."

"You haven't been to Staines at all," roared the "captain" in a rage, "you've sold us, and so has Jack, and now we're in a pretty mess. Here," said he, turning to me, "the papers expect copy, and I must write something. Can't you fudge up anything?"

"Nothing whatever," said I, "the procession certainly passed the lane, but it was gone in a moment."

"Did you notice anything particular?" inquired he anxiously.

"The only thing," I replied, "I noticed was, that one of the sheep from a flock coming down the lane ran under the feet of the leaders, and frightened the animals a little bit."

"What," said he, catching hold of me eagerly, "do you call that *nothing?* My dear fellow, tell me every particular—be careful, recollect every circumstance."

Astonished at his sudden anxiety, I told him, as clearly as I could remember, the particulars of this very simple affair, how that, the horses being startled, the leaders began to caper, the postilions to look uneasy, but that, three or four bumpkins having started forward, and

laid hold of the horses's heads, and soothed them, the royal carriage proceeded, and was out of sight in a moment.

"And this happened close to the gravel pits, did it not?"

"Well," said I, "there certainly were some pits about half a mile off, out of which the contractors got their ballast."

"Did the king do or say anything?"

"Nothing that I can vouch for, except to tell the postilions to go on."

"And the mob cheered, did they not?"

"I fancied I heard some two or three huzzas, certainly."

"That will do, my dear fellow. This nice little bit of 'fat' will afford a mutton chop, and a pot of 'heavy,' so order them at the bar."

Wondering what could possibly be made out of my bare morsel of information, I bespoke the viands, and while they were preparing Conroy was writing away with vigour. My wonder, the next morning, was chequered with amusement and admiration, when in all the papers, conspicuously, in large type, leaded, with Egyptian heading, appeared

"MIRACULOUS ESCAPE OF ROYALTY.

"After the interesting proceedings of the day were concluded, an event occurred which, but for the seasonable interposition of Divine Providence, might have put the whole nation in mourning, and possibly plunged all Europe in grief. Just as the Royal *cortége* had reached

the cross-road leading to the Castle, an infuriated sheep suddenly rushed from the lane, and dashing under the feet of the high-mettled steeds, set them plunging and kicking with fearful impetuosity. The alarmed postilions in vain endeavoured to restrain their frantic excitement; the leaders had already turned their heads towards a chain of pits which had been excavated to a fearful depth, in order to furnish ballast for the earthworks of the bridge; the animals were preparing to start madly off in that perilous direction, when the imminent danger to Majesty was in an instant comprehended by the alarmed and loyal crowd which had congregated at the spot, anxious to catch a glimpse of their beloved and popular monarch. A dozen brave hearts and brawny arms instantly precipitated themselves towards the scene of danger, and seizing the steeds, fortunately succeeded in turning their heads from the direction of destruction, and calming their terror. Our "sailor king," unmoved by the sudden danger, never even for a moment lost that coolness which is one of his most distinguishing characteristics, and which doubtless he would display in the same matchless manner, were it his fortune, Nelson-like, to be called upon to lead the British fleet against the country's most puissant foe. Putting his head out at the window, the King quietly nodded his thanks, and calmly called to the coachman to 'go on.' The carriage was soon in motion, and amidst the deafening shouts of an adoring people, the *cortége* resumed its route, and reached Windsor Castle in safety. Had it not been for prompt and effectual

succour at this unexpected emergency, the consequences might have been fearful to contemplate. Reform might have lost her most glorious champion; the nation might have had to mourn the sudden bereavement of its most popular Sovereign; and Europe, in its still unsettled state, might have seen serious and momentous changes in her political relations. But the danger was happily averted by the loyal promptitude of the people; and another proof has been added—if proof were wanting—that a King who reigns in the hearts of his subjects is far more secure than if environed by a standing army."

I cut out the paragraph to keep as a curiosity; I give it *verbatim*. The lesson it conveyed was not lost on me in my after career as a "casual contributor."

But if the "liners" sometimes imposed on the papers, they had to guard against imposition on the other side. This I early found out, especially in one instance—that of the *Sunday Monitor*, which always made a special feature of some leading occurrence of the week. A violent storm had burst over the metropolis, and a notice was given to the various "casuals" that for every paragraph of information used half-a-guinea would be paid. My contribution amounted only to the particulars of a man killed by lightning as he was pumping, and in the report I stated, as a remarkable feature of the occurrence, that, though no external mark of injury appeared, yet "three buttons" on the man's waistcoat were fused by the fluid.

I looked at the paper the next pay day, and found that all the information sent into the office had been

thrown into the form of a narrative to give it the appearance of having been collected by one of their regular staff. My little bit of disastrous electricity was there, but evidently rewritten with the design to disguise it. I presented my bill to the editor; he shook his head, and remarked that nothing was down to me, the whole of the matter having been furnished by their own reporter.

"*That* is my paragraph, nevertheless," said I, pointing to the deceased pumper, "and not your reporter's, who took the matter from the copy I furnished."

"Why," said he, "you don't mean to say you imposed on us a fictitious account?"

"No, the man was actually killed by lightning while pumping."

"Well," said he, "and would not such an incident be generally known."

"Yes," said I; "but in order, should there be any doubt, that I might identify my body, I took the precaution to *melt three of his buttons.*"

"Oh! I understand," said the editor, with a half smile. He signed my bill without another word, and I became afterwards rather a favoured contributor to the paper.

CHAPTER VII.

MY DEBUT IN "HIGH LIFE."

A FEW months before making my bow at Marlborough-street Police Court, I did duty at the Mansion House for Mr. Thomas Haynes, then one of the almost extinct class of old reporters termed "penny-a-liners," who, by his learning and general acquirements, materially helped to make the press what it is in power and influence, and who assisted perhaps quite as much as fine writers to make it respected and respectable.

Mr. Tom Haynes—of whom more anon—was taken ill, and I consented to fill his post temporarily. It was just when the Reform mania was at its zenith. Sir John Key, for the second time Lord Mayor, was then at the very height of his popularity; his tendencies were decidedly Tory, but having been urged by Jay, the solicitor, his bosom friend, to make his election, he decided in favour of the side on which lay his interest, not his principle; and the result was, that he received the unusual honour of being elected to fill the civic chair for the second time. He was a very good-natured man, and that quality shall be permitted, like charity, to cover a multitude of sins.

I had given the Mansion House the benefit of my presence for about a week, during which period I contrived to cook up a case or two in the comic fashion, which, though I thought very little of, yet secretly felt persuaded the correctly judging public was, in that matter,

directly at issue with me, when the Lord Mayor, after a few complimentary phrases about the ability with which I had discharged my vicarious duties, said, "You'll dine with us on Thursday, I hope. It's a reception-day. My secretary shall send you a card." I bowed acquiescence, and accordingly, in the evening, I was gratified at receiving an elegant envelope, enclosing an embossed card, which contained the following invite :—

"The Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress request the honour of Mr. Potts's company to dinner on Thursday, at seven o'clock, to meet Her Majesty's Ministers."

A bright thought or two flashed instantly across my mind: I must here premise that at that somewhat juvenile period of my life, I fear there was a shade or so—not more—of something tolerably *green* in my composition. What! to meet "Her Majesty's Ministers?" Could the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress have got up this little party expressly on my account? Were they really anxious for this introduction to take place? The idea was rather too flattering. I felt, however, that the "meeting" would be delightful on my side; I hoped somehow to make the delight mutual. Parliamentary Reform was the current topic of the day in political circles; the "comic cases" at the Mansion House were, not unlikely, the topics in all other circles. I should, perhaps, in a *tête-à-tête* with Russell, Grey, Graham, Stanley, or some one of "Her Majesty's Ministers," have an opportunity of expressing my admiration of the Reform Bill, and I might then contrive to elicit an opinion as to the Mansion House mimicries.

I should certainly express unbounded pleasure at being introduced to the immortal authors of the "Reform Bill"—the authors of the Reform Bill might be gratified to know the equally imperishable writer of "The Conscientious Chummy," "The Grand Bobbery between Higgs and Griggs," and some other trifles of mine that had set all the world laughing, or, at least, ought to have done so.

Great men, in past ages, had befriended modest genius; I ventured to hope that some proof of this noble feeling not being quite extinct in modern times, would take place on Thursday—Who knows?

My principal care was as to dress. My wardrobe was not then completely adapted to Court gaieties; a suit of decent black and a satin stock were all I could venture to promise "Her Majesty's Ministers." Black silk stockings, though no doubt the "cheese," were an extravagance not to be thought of; but I considered that unsullied white cotton, with well-fitting pumps, would, perhaps, draw attention to a neat foot, of which I might have justly been proud, but being entirely without personal vanity on this as well as in all other points, I used merely to smile when my shoemaker complimented me on having quite the model feet of the parish.

One piece of strictly appropriate display I resolved to have; it was a large topaz brooch, set round with pearls, which my landlady's daughter had given me an opportunity of closely admiring one Sunday evening, when, finding that we were the only occupants of the

house, the considerate creature knocked at my door to ask if I felt lonely, and if she should lend me a volume of Doctor somebody's sermons.

The hint I dropped about the brooch was immediately taken, and the good-natured lass, with her own chubby fingers, put in a couple of stitches to secure it more firmly, as its dimensions and weight, being certainly rather more formidable than I had anticipated, required some such safeguard.

Suppose me full figged for the "meeting," and that I had taken a parting peep in the looking-glass, the prominent reflections on both sides being that there were conspicuously visible Queen Elizabeth's well-known "letter of recommendation" and the topaz brooch.

I made my way, at half-past seven, to the private door of the Mansion House, and with a modest rat-tat was at once admitted. There was nothing to discompose the most timid when the door was thrown open; so I entered, and at once proceeded to divest myself of clogs and cloak. One of the powdered and liveried fraternity, who was lounging about in an indolent pick-tooth kind of way, blandly inquired my name, to which I as blandly responded—we will say—"Jonathan Potts." With the voice of a Stentor, the insidious rascal made the name resound through the building. Another Stentor on the first landing caught up the name, it was again echoed by a third, and a burst of music from a brass band—a bar or two of "See the Conquering Hero" I suppose—immediately followed.

I was a little discomposed at this sudden notoriety,

and could have wished for a reception of a quieter character, especially when the Lord Mayor's jockey—in hunting cap and boots, making the professional salaam—came forward to precede me as I made my way upstairs. At the first landing the two city marshals, doffing their plumed cocked hats, heralded me while I mounted the second flight. I could have well dispensed with some of this state; but thinking it was pre-arranged by my kind entertainers for bestowal on the "honoured guest," I followed the marshals, who marched in the van with imperturbable gravity, until I came in sight of the hall of entrance. What to do with my clogs and cloak was a little puzzling; but, making a virtue of necessity, I thrust them boldly into the hands of one of the gorgeously gold-laced state footmen, who received them with an air of ineffable disgust and deeply offended dignity.

I gained a moment to draw on my kids, and being at last, in my estimation, quite *comme il faut*, I passed between the bowing and covertly grinning marshals into the room. In a moment my eyes were dazzled with the sudden splendour and the brilliancy of the scene. A double lane of court *habitués*, densely packed together, led up to what appeared to be a gilded sofa throne, on which sat a stout lady—I conjectured she was the Lady Mayoress—receiving the compliments of a big, burly personage, whom I recognised at once by his star, blue ribbon, black velvet skull-cap, and hearty haw-haw, to be his Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex. On all sides might be seen diamonds sparkling, feathers waving,

Windsor uniforms glancing; and unlucky I in the midst, walking gingerly up the avenue of notabilities, who cast furtive glances—I am afraid not of admiration—at the smirking eruption from cockneydom in plain clothes, who had, for a moment, monopolised the attention of the aristocratic assembly. Up to this point my confidence—audacity, if you had rather—had not deserted me. But now my courage fairly oozed out. I saw I had made some terrible mistake. I was in doubt what to do—whether to advance and pay kneeling homage to the Civic Queen, or to plunge desperately through the living barrier of plumes and uniforms, and hide my confusion in the background. At this moment the Lord Mayor caught my eye. He was a good-natured man, I have already said; and his behaviour on this occasion satisfied me his character in this respect was not undeserved, for he came down the avenue immediately, took me by the arm, and, as if whispering a state secret, said,

"I can't present you to the Lady Mayoress, as you are not in court costume, but I shall be happy to introduce you when you take your coffee in the private drawing-room."

"The fact is," I muttered, "I made a mistake, I suppose, in being announced?"

"Well, well—never mind about it; come this way." Then, courteously but peremptorily, pushing between the company, he placed me at the back of the crowd, and left me, that he might receive some genuine grandees who were announced.

I was unreservedly glad at this solution of my *contre-*

temps; in the fulness of my exultation, I tapped a red-coated individual on the shoulder, and addressing him as "noble captain," jocosely requested him to charge as if at the head of his troop on the opposing company, so as to make an opening for me into the ante-room—promising that when I was at the head of the War Department, his claim to promotion should not be overlooked. The individual thus familiarly addressed was rather short, square built, and farmer featured, who I afterwards found out was General Lord Hill, with military urbanity made way, and I soon found myself in the ante-room, where the οι πολλοι of the guests—the "gentlemen of the press"—were making their remarks and notes on the company.

The first familiar face I encountered was that of Mr. Wight. "What," said he, with no very complimentary stare, "are you the 'Potts' announced just now? The white cotton stockinged 'd'ye-see-my-grandmother's-brooch,' Potts, eh? My dear fellow, don't *show* more than you can help, otherwise you'll stand a chance of being hanged for killing half the company with laughter."

Rather mortified at this summary condemnation of my personal appearance, I contrived secretly to pocket the brooch, and dinner being announced, I followed into the Egyptian Hall, and boldly placed myself between an alderman in furred robes and a starched and stately personage in Court suit, immense *queue*, and inconveniently conspicuous sword.

By this time my *château d'Espagne*—that is, if it ever existed—relative to the pleasant possibilities to ensue

from "meeting Her Majesty's ministers," had resolved into thin air. I resumed my self-complacency, and determined to devote myself to the unrestricted enjoyment of a first introduction to unlimited turtle and champagne. Conversation, I saw, was wholly out of the question. My aldermanic neighbour was too busy gallanting a very pretty lady on his left; and my aristocratic neighbour was seemingly too full of lordly contempt for the scene and the viands—so, at least, I judged by his putting down the gold spoon with a rueful look after the first mouthful of turtle—and too elevated in station for anything approaching a little friendly dinner-digesting chit-chat.

Dinner, to which I did ample justice, being over, the ceremony of the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress drinking to their guests in the "loving cup" commenced. I was watching the coming cup with some curiosity, when I felt my elbow nudged, and on looking round, saw that my noble neighbour had turned himself round towards me, and with an air of more humility than I thought it was possible for such a high personage to exhibit, "humbly begged my pardon, but would I be kind enough just to put him up to the dodge of the 'loving cup,' as he had never been at a public dinner before? I am the publisher of the *Mark-lane Record*," said he.

"What," replied I, "a newspaper publisher? Why, I took you for a lord-in-waiting at least."

"Ha! well!—perhaps I may *look* the character tolerably well, but I wish the costume at the d——. I've

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been fool enough to pay two guineas to Nathan for a court dress, and have been in purgatory all the time I've had it on. The infernal bag behind catches the collar of my coat, so that I can't move right or left without turning my whole body; and if I bend my head forward in the least, I'm afraid it will pull off my wig. You've been tucking in gloriously, while I've hardly tasted a morsel —only one spoonful of turtle, and part of that spilt over my waistcoat, which I expect I shall have to get cleaned, or, perhaps, have to pay for altogether; and as for the champagne, I ain't quick enough to catch the bottle."

"At all events," rejoined I, with a supremely patronising air, "you shan't want for champagne now. Here, waiter," says I, briskly, seizing hold of one of the Lord Mayor's footmen as I imagined, "bring us some champagne." A withering look from the individual I had imprisoned, a significant glance at his sword, as I thought, convinced me of the terrible blunder I had committed.

When the offended party had passed on, the alarmed publisher whispered, "Why, that's Lord ——, his Majesty's Master of the Horse."

CHAPTER VIII.

A RUBBER AT WHIST.

I MAY as well finish the story of my adventures on this memorable night. While sipping my coffee in the withdrawing room of the Lady Mayoress, Sir John Key approached. "Potts," said he, "you play whist—of course?"

"Of course," replied I, promptly.

"Come then; I want one to make up a table, and you are the very man."

The Lord Mayor locked his arm into mine, and leading me into the boudoir, gave me an introduction to three expectant whist players—three of the best in London, as I afterwards learned—Woodthorpe, the chamberlain, who never passed a night, Sundays excepted, without his rubber; Higgins, or Figgins, a common councilman and needle maker in Fish-street Hill; and noseless Wells, once one of the handsomest men of his time, until he met with that kind of amatory accident which bereft him of his most prominent facial feature.

"Here's our fourth," said the jolly-looking chamberlain; "you're a crack player, no doubt."

"Why," said I, humouring the joke, "I've astonished my aunts in the country, above a bit, with my whist."

"Then we'll play as we sit, eh, Figgins? Come cut for deal and the usual points."

Figgins did not half relish the arrangement; he

looked suspiciously at my then whiskerless appearance; but seeing no signs of misgiving on my part, he submitted with the best grace possible, and the game commenced. I found out that the "usual points" were shilling points and ten shillings the rub. Now, it immediately occurred to me that my whole stock of cash consisted of a well-preserved half-sovereign. I calculated that the loss of a bumper would involve the sacrifice of thirteen shillings—three shillings more than my capital. This reflection served to warm me unpleasantly.

I committed every kind of unpardonable atrocity at whist, trumping my partner's tricks, and winding up by a palpable revoke which enabled my opponents to score a treble for the first game. My diminutive partner looked like a thumb-bottle of verjuice—the purple in his visage concentrated itself in his nose, and his bile overflowed in some taunt about my requiring a few more lessons from my "country aunts," which made my ears tingle with rage.

The covert jokes of his opponents evidently did not act as anodynes, for my partner snappishly refused a bet of three to one on the rubgame, and sneeringly recommended me to take both sides. In the desperation of the moment I assented, and found myself saddled with further probable liabilities to the extent of six sovereigns. In the extremity of my perplexity, I first thought of rushing to the Lord Mayor, and negotiating the temporary loan of a £10 note—next to feign a sudden mutiny of imprisoned champagne with threat of breaking gaol; but before I had made

up my mind what course to adopt, the deal had gone round, and the cards proved so far favourable, as that we managed to scramble through and to score a single. I perceived that the blue in my partner's visage had partially transferred itself to the countenance of my adversaries. The third deal commenced, when, on a casual glance at my cards, I noticed the four honours, with other cards strong enough to win the odd trick. "Now we have all seen our hands, gentlemen," said I, carelessly, "suppose we double our bets."

"I don't mind another sovereign on the rub," said the chamberlain, "but I never double."

"I'll go the same," said Wells.

Both bets were taken, and my partner led off with an ace, which I instantly trumped. The blue hereupon re-visited my partner's nose with augmented intensity. I paid no attention to it, nor to the inaudible chuckle of my opponents, but coolly went on playing trumps out until I had secured the odd trick, and, of course, the rubber.

"Why did you trump my ace, sir?" inquired my partner, sourly.

"Oh!" replied I, paying off old scores, "I play to win, and never trust to a partner who don't play quite up to *my* game. Now, let us see how we stand, gentlemen—five points and ten shillings bye, 15s., and £3 bet and one sovereign extra are £4. 15s. from one, and £4 from the other."

My antagonists shelled out the money with the air of men losing so many teeth. I rose from the table—to

their utter astonishment—promising the "revenge" on a future occasion, and then pleading the exigencies of the "press," left them in doubt to this day whether they had not been victimised by some card-sharper.

Elated with my success, and the welcome addition to my purse, and having had quite enough of "ministerial" amenities and Mansion-house festivities, I gratified the belaced flunkey with half-a-crown for his care of my personal property, and went home to my lodgings, where I recounted to my landlady and her daughter the wonders I had witnessed, and the prominent part I played in the Mansion-house programme; in which narration, I fear I drew rather largely on my imagination for my facts.

CHAPTER IX.

SINGULAR ROBBERY AT THE TRAVELLERS' CLUB. SAM WHITE, THE SWEEP.

THE "humourous" reports, which at first I furnished exclusively to the *Morning Herald*, were received with so much favour by the British public, then sufficiently enlightened and intelligent to have a taste for that kind of reading, that I was speedily engaged by the other morning papers to send them general "copy," and I soon found myself the recognised and sole contributor to all the morning journals. This was an exceeding pleasant position, for at that period police-court pay was liberal, each paper being anxious for "good copy."

Of course my attention was not confined to the extracting of "points of humour" from "night charges," as they were brought to the court. I was obliged to give even more attention to the "serious" business, of which this court, as I have already stated, furnished, and continues to furnish, a larger proportion than any other of the metropolitan police courts.

The first case of real importance that came under my notice was a robbery at the Travellers' Club. Six large silver candlesticks, valued at £300, were stolen one morning from the dining-hall in a most mysterious way. They were safe the previous night, as deposed to by the steward; they were safe at six the next morning, as vouched for by the hall porter; and they had disappeared by eight o'clock, when the head waiter proceeded, as part of his morning duty, to give out the plate for cleaning. The Duke of Wellington, I recollect, came to the police-court with the steward, secretary, and some of the committee, to seek the advice of Sir F. Roe and Mr. Dyer as to the best mode of recovering the property and detecting the robber. Plank, Clements, Goddard, and Schofield, were the officers called into the private room.

The only evidence that could be extracted, after a long examination of night and hall porters, was, that a sweep had called about six o'clock to sweep the dining-room chimney; that he was not permitted to perform the job, as the steward had left no orders; that he went away to speak to his master, who, he said, contracted to sweep the club chimneys, and returned in about half an

hour to take away his "kit," which he had been allowed to leave in the hall, he having, according to his explanation, called at the wrong club. As the parties interested in this affair—members of the club—were among the highest in the land, of course it became a point with the magistrates to assist the "Travellers" in the recovery of their candlesticks and the capture of the culprit. Three of the sharpest officers were immediately put on this business, Goddard, Clements, and Schofield. The trio adjourned to the back of the office, and called the hall porter into council.

"Was the sweep thickset and boss-eyed?"

"That answered his description."

"Did he bring a soot-bag apparently half full of soot with him?"

"He did."

"And did he ask to leave the bag in the hall?"

"He did."

"This bag he fetched away soon afterwards?"

"He did."

The three officers consulted for a moment.

"Sam White and his youngest kid," said Clements. The other two nodded. "The 'swag' will most likely be at Mo Jacobs' or Ikey Solomons' (two of the most noted 'fences,' then living at the east end of the town): you two look after that lot, and I'll see if I can pick up Sam."

The officers, having been furnished with proper warrants, were soon on the scent. Before the morning had waned they had four of the candlesticks at the

court, ere time had been given to clean them from the wax droppings of the previous night, and the other two were shortly afterwards stopped *in transitu* to the Barbican melting-pot, kept at proper heat night and day for the accommodation of the dealers in what was then known as "white soup," which, translated into vernacular, meant "melted silver."

The capture of the thief proved not quite so easy an affair. I had the particulars from Clements himself. His first visit was to a harridan in Duck-lane, where "Sam" at one time lodged. It cost him three half-pints of neat gin before he could induce her to say a word. But the potency of the gin mollified her crusty temper so far that the officer contrived to extract from her, bit by bit, that White had given up "business" at that end of the town for some time; had eloped with the favourite sultana of a rival sweep; had taken his youngest boy with him, and had gone to live in Wentworth-street, Whitechapel, then and for some years afterwards a perfect den of burglars, thieves, and the lowest description of loose women. Of this locality, and especially of George-yard, which abutted on it, and the "White Horse" public-house, the head-quarters of the "cracksmen," I shall have something to say in due season.

As Wentworth-street was known to the officers to be tenanted with desperate characters, who would no more mind beating out the brains or cutting the throats of all the Bow-street runners in London, if they had a chance, than they would of swallowing a glass of grog,

it was thought advisable—as the service was unquestionably one of possible personal danger, not only from the district in which the capture was to be made, but from the determined character of the powerful ruffian who was to be taken—to obtain the assistance of three of the Lambeth-street officers, whose persons were known to the Wentworth-street gang, and who knew the Wentworth-street gang individually. To these six officers, well armed with pistol and cutlass, was added a seventh, a volunteer, who frequently, *en amateur*, made his appearance at the police-court to fraternise with the officers. This volunteer was named Maestry, a six-feet-four semi-witted Anglo-Italian, who filled the post of private footman to the old Duchess of Richmond. His services, at his urgent request, were accepted; he was furnished with a cutlass, which he was, like the others, required to wear beneath his long frock-coat.

The whole party, according to arrangement, met at Wentworth-street, and, dividing themselves into two sections, one entered Wentworth-street by Whitechapel, the other, consisting of the Lambeth-street officers and Maestry, at the other extremity. The first party had not proceeded more than half way down the street when they saw White and his little boy coming along. White no sooner caught sight of the west-end officers, whom he knew, than, rightly conjecturing they did not come there on a mere chance visit, he suddenly turned tail and ran up the street, but only to be caught in the arms of the Lambeth-street officers, who instantly threw him down, and, before he could make any effectual resist-

ance, had a pair of handcuffs securely snapped on his wrists. The caption might have been thus cleverly effected with no more trouble or danger, had it not been for a piece of unlooked-absurdity on the part of Maestry. While the officers were securing White, Maestry took it into his head to exhibit a little piece of personal importance on his own account. He drew his cutlass and flourished it about, walking behind the officers as they were forcing the but half-subdued ruffian towards a hackney coach which they had stationed in readiness in Whitechapel. I have said that Maestry was gaunt-looking and preposterously tall. By way of bravado or practical joke he pretended to make a cut with his "lash" at a woman who was looking out at a window at least twenty feet above him. The woman, in real or pretended alarm, drew in her head so suddenly that her bonnet fell off into the street. Instantly a yell was raised on all sides that a woman's head had been cut off by one of the officers. The whole street was alive in a twinkling. Bricks, stones, pokers, all kinds of weapons and missiles, were brought into requisition. Hundreds of half-drunken ferocious wretches hemmed in the officers, several of whom were seriously maltreated, and the officers, in self-defence, were obliged to knock down their assailants right and left with their heavy brass-headed staves. Had the attack not fortunately commenced when they were nearly at the top of the street, it is doubtful whether the prisoner would not have been rescued, and some of the officers either maimed or murdered. But finding the matter become

rather "too hot" to be pleasant, the officers went to work in earnest. The strong ruffian White made prodigious efforts to free himself from the handcuffs, dashing his manacled hands with such fury and force at the officers as to send them on their knees repeatedly. He was quieted for a time by a heavy blow sheer on the temple, which gave his captors an opportunity of dragging him to a hackney-coach, and securing him therein before he recovered his senses. The coach drove away, and the other officers made their escape from the mob, but not without severe bruises and injuries—Maestry, who caused the mischief, coming off with the loss of a couple of teeth, a gash from a brick on the cheeks and the bone laid bare for six inches of one of his shins.

Of the special career of this White, perhaps, nothing more may be said than that this Travellers' job effectually put a stop to it. As the officers cleverly surmised, White had gained admittance to the club by his old dodge of pretending that he had been sent to sweep one of the chimneys. He had concealed his boy in the sack which he was permitted to leave in the hall while he went back, as he said, to make further inquiry. The boy, who had been thoroughly well tutored, and who knew from information, no doubt obtained through a confederate in the service of the club, where the property was to be found, watched his opportunity, got out of the sack, and substituted the candlesticks. As the property was too heavy for him to carry off, he let himself out by the hall door unperceived, and no suspicion was

excited when White came back with his excuse and took away the sack he had left.

It need only to be stated, that White was tried, convicted, and transported for life.

CHAPTER X.

THE MYSTERIOUS MULATTO.

One of the most renowned police officers—and well he deserved his reputation—was Plank, the head of the Marlborough-street staff. Originally a barber, his genius soon led him to discover that he had mistaken his vocation; and, having succeeded in procuring an appointment in the Bow-street Patrol—the "Red-Breasts," as they were then termed—his abilities were speedily recognized, and he soon found himself transferred to the better paid and more regular duties of police officer attached to the Marlborough-street Police-Court, where for years he continued one of its most distinguished characters.

During the many years in which he was actively employed, he had, what is termed, a run of "best business." Every case requiring tact, delicacy, and experience, was confided to him, either to pursue the inquiry and arrest the offender himself, or to select the officer best fitted to perform the required duties. His life, if written, would furnish a remarkable history; he was, however, from principle, rather taciturn on the subjec of the high life cases in which he had been employed

very much to his ultimate profit. His remark was, "he should only make 'wild work' among great families if he were to tell all he knew." Though resolute in action, and of wiry make, he was unfit, from rather diminutive physical organization, for dealing alone with cases which required animal strength, and downright hand-to-hand personal work. Having received the appointment of chief officer, and his shrewdness, ready resources, and experience, rendered him deservedly a favourite with each succeeding magistrate, and with all his brother officers.

Before the new police was established, Plank was omnipotent at the police-court, and an officer would much rather have fallen under the censure of the magistrates, than have incurred his displeasure. Many are yet alive who can recollect the sharp visage, the active movements, and especially the rapid mode of utterance, in which he issued his instructions to his subordinates. No sooner was the magistrate's private door thrown half open, and an iron-grey head quickly thrust out, the aquiline nose surmounted by large silver-mounted spectacles, over which a pair of piercing eyes peered with a peculiarly penetrating and sagacious look, than every officer was on the alert, well knowing that something important was in the wind. The name of an officer being sharply pronounced, that officer instantly followed into the private room, and in a few minutes was packing up his traps on a mission either of danger or importance. Two or three anecdotes will, perhaps, serve to give an idea of the high estimation in which his abilities were held, and his incorruptibility in his office. He has often

told me that, had he taken a tenth part of the bribes offered to him to wink at the escape of some wealthy or titled culprit, he might have retired twenty years before he was superannuated on a retiring pension with a handsome fortune.

One well authenticated instance may serve to corroborate this statement. Plank was the officer selected to arrest Fauntleroy, the banker forger. Fauntleroy was a private friend of the sitting magistrates, and, when the charge against him was made *exparte*, his character stood so high that little or no faith was placed on the evidence, on which, however, the magistrates could do no otherwise than issue his warrant.

Plank went to the banking-house in Berners-street, and in as delicate a way as possible, intimated to Fauntleroy that he must convey him in custody to the police-court, on a charge of forgery. The banker shewed no appearance of dismay at this announcement, but expressed at once his readiness to go with the officer to the court. They walked there arm in arm conversing in the most open manner, Fauntleroy giving his own explanation of the affair, and evidently wishing to impress on the officer that the charge was a malicious and unfounded invention. As the day business had terminated, and the evening sittings—there were evening sittings then—did not come on till eight o'clock, the banker was not placed in the criminal cell, but shewn into Mr. Conant's drawing-room, where he conversed very much at his ease until the hour for examination came on. Some evidence was then tended, but not of a conclusive nature; consequently

the magistrate remanded the case, taking large bail for the banker's future appearance.

Previous to the day fixed for the re-examination, a series of documents was discovered, which left no doubt of the guilt of the accused, and of the premeditated and extensive character of his delinquencies. A careful watch had been kept on the banker's movements, but no indications of any attempt to evade justice could be detected. When on their way again to the police court an offer of £1000 down was made to Plank to take his prisoner round by Blenheim-street, where it afterwards came out a post-chaise was stationed, with a number of resolute fellows, who, after a sham attack in order to save appearances, were to overpower the officer, and to effect the rescue.

"The sum," said Plank, "staggered me for a moment; it was a great temptation to a poor man; but I made up my mind to resist it, and only tightened my hold on the arm of the banker, at the same time giving the 'office' to a couple of disguised constables, who were, by my directions, following at a distance to keep a sharp look out. I got him to the court safely, and he never was out of custody until he swung at the Old Bailey."

Another case, in which his adroitness came out in full lustre, is the following:—

Some years ago, at the usual fashionable hour, a tall, slim mulatto, dressed in the highest style of fashion, remarkable for a profuse display of costly jewellery, a white cravat tied with a faultless precision that even a

Brummell might envy, and with large misshapen feet pinched into pumps at least two sizes too small, giving him the gait of a man walking on eggs, might be seen in Bond-street daily. No one knew who he was, or from what source he derived the means of making such a conspicuous display. It was, however, rumoured he was some wealthy West India planter, who had come over on the then active business of West India Negro Emancipation. He was sometimes seen with a young, captivating Englishwoman, dressed with equal splendour.

"I used to meet him regularly," said Plank, "when office hours were over; and after two or three meetings of this sort I felt pretty sure he was a 'macer,' and got his living on the 'cross.' I resolved to get to the bottom of the mystery, and I very soon did so. This was the dodge. His wife used to throw herself in the way of elderly noblemen and steady-going Members of Parliament, and her pretty face, beautiful leg and foot, and young married-woman look, soon made people desirous of a more intimate acquaintance. When first accosted she would pretend to be highly indignant, shew her wedding-ring, and declare she was the wife of a captain in the navy, who had been abroad twelve months, and was expected home with his ship daily. Those old fools who had a *penchant* for a little quiet flirtation with another man's wife fell into the trap, and, after a few meetings, would prevail on her to let them visit her. She lived in King-street, in handsome lodgings. The visitor would make a sober call at night; and then, while in the midst of a little innocent chat, the captain

in the navy—who was our swell acquaintance, the mulatto—would burst into the room, knock about the candlesticks and fire-irons, break the looking-glasses, tear his wool, and perform all the antics of a deeply-injured, frantic husband. A threat of an action for *crim. con.*, or the production of a pair of pistols for satisfaction over the table, would generally lead to a parley, and there is no telling what sums were extorted this way.

I remember, on one occasion, having to get back from the lady a packet of despatches which a Cabinet Minister had lost out of his pocket, he having been waylaid on his way from the Foreign Office, and 'trapped' by the lady in the usual style; and as he could not make his grand speech on foreign affairs in the House until he had them again, he came to me, told me the circumstances, and, after a deal of trouble, I got them back for £100."

One morning a staid country gentleman—a county magistrate and county member—had a long interview with Sir F. Roe. The magistrate called me in.

"Tell my officer your story," said the magistrate, "and I have no doubt he will get you out of the scrape."

The old gentleman then proceeded to state his case. He had been caught by the leers of this pretty lady—had been persuaded to pay her a visit in order to read the postscript of her husband's last letter, and while just beginning a pleasant *tête-à-tête*, the door was flung open, and the infuriated mulatto made his appearance—in short, the old scene over again. The old gentleman had been obliged to part with his gold watch, his ready

cash, and to borrow £50 from a friend before the injured husband would be mollified. He had submitted to the robbery, hoping it would end this rather delicate affair, prevent it from getting wind—and especially from coming to the ears of his wife and family—he having grown up sons and daughters. But he was wonderfully mistaken. In about a week afterwards, as he was quietly preparing to take a flight into the country, on coming through the hall he saw a veiled figure, who asked him for a few minutes' conversation. To his alarm and indignation the lady proved to be the mulatto's wife. She made up a pitiful tale of the unhappy life she had lived ever since the adventure in King-street, of her husband's jealous conduct and unkind treatment, and hinted that he was waiting outside to expose both of them unless she brought back another £100. The money was given to her, and the old gentleman had a respite from annoyance for a week or two. Other applications were then made, again complied with, again renewed, until there seemed to be no end of the persecution and the payments. After having paid in this way upwards of £800, he resolveed to put an end to the system of extortion, and accordingly took the determination to make his case known to the magistrate at the police-court.

"I am resolved to punish the black fellow," said the gentleman, "cost what it will. I don't want to hurt his wife, for I really think she is foolish enough to entertain a slight—a very slight regard for me, which her last letter, I think, sufficiently shews."

"Anything in the letter about being 'content with the humblest fare in the humblest cottage, if cheered with a visit from one who for the first time possesses, and ever will possess, the dearest affections of my woman's heart?'"

"Why, yes," said the gentleman, looking a little foolish, "certainly those words are in the letter. The magistrate, I suppose, told you what was in my letter?"

"Oh, no," said Plank, opening a drawer, and taking out a handful of *billets-doux;* "you are the sixth I know of to whom the lady has given her 'dearest affections.' Here are as many notes to six gentlemen—I won't tell names—word for word the same as your note."

"Bless me," said the gentleman, half angry, half laughing; "have I, at my time of life, been made such a fool of? Well, well! the thing must not go on or get abroad. Can you manage the matter for me?"

"I think I can," said I. "Write a letter to the mulatto, which I will see properly delivered, telling the man—not the woman—that you have instructed your steward to arrange the business with him, and that he must meet you at eight o'clock to-morrow, on your way to the House."

The old gentleman did as directed, and I told Ballard to be in readiness to accompany me to the place of rendezvous. At the appointed time the old gentleman was in Cockspur-street. The mulatto met him, and after a few minutes' conversation they parted. I then went up to the mulatto, saying I was Mr. ——'s steward, and had some business to transact with a gentleman.

"Yes, yes; all right. I am dat gentleman. What you offer?"

"I must first satisfy myself that you are the right person. Can you shew me any letter?"

"Oh, yes; here it is." The mulatto pulled out the letter he had received from the gentleman.

This was just the evidence I required, and which in all the other cases had been wanting. In a second he found one arm taken hold of by his old acquaintance, Ballard, and the other by me. The mulatto only grinned.

"Ah," said he, "I knows vot to do. I shall expose de villin dat rob my wife's affections. I have just now tell him dat tousands on tousands shan't prevent me to bring my action for *crim. con.*"

"Come, come," said I, "listen to reason. There's evidence enough of conspiracy to 'lag' you; but I don't want to do you or your wife any harm, if you will agree to give up this little game. Come into the British, and let us talk over the matter."

We went into the tavern, and after a good deal of hard bargaining I got him to sign a paper, that in consideration of receiving £100 down he would never more molest the old gentleman, and further that his wife should never write or go near his residence again.

This mode of settlement was so satisfactory to the old gentleman, that he not only paid the money immediately, but added a handsome present over and above my regular charge.

CHAPTER XI.

A WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING.

THE assistance of the police was one morning invoked at Vine-street Station, Inspector Charles Baker being then on duty. The applicant was a jeweller in Regent-street, named Jones, and his story was as follows:—

The previous week a gentleman, whose garments were of the most orthodox clerical cut, entered his shop, and having been informed, in reply to a question, that the Bishop of Salisbury and his family were customers, presented his card, on which was engraved "The Rev. Hezekiah Poole, incumbent of St. David's, Machynlleth, Wales." He had, he said, just been presented with the valuable gift of the mastership of the grammar school in his parish, through the interest of his college friend, the Bishop of Salisbury, and he wished to testify his gratitude by making a suitable present to each of the right reverend gentleman's four daughters. As the family dealt at this establishment, he had decided upon letting it have the benefit of his orders, because the proprietor, he considered, would be best able to inform him in what direction the taste of the young ladies laid. He explained his views so far as to let it be understood he desired the articles to be of the very best description, but that the whole cost of the four presents must not exceed £100 or £120, for which he would pay cash down. As ladies were rather fanciful, especially in

matters of jewellery, he would not venture to select on his own taste and judgment alone, but would like a few articles of *bijouterie* to be sent to St. James's-square—the bishop's town residence, and then the young ladies, with himself, might form themselves into a committee of taste, and decide this momentous matter. The Rev. Hezekiah Poole further stated that the articles must be sent the next morning to St. James's-square at ten o'clock, at which hour he had an appointment with the bishop; and further, that punctuality was to be observed, as he had promised to "take duty" for a clerical brother at eleven o'clock the same day.

Mr. Jones adopted the precaution, after his customer had left, of sending to a clerical robemaker in Bond-street, to inquire respecting Mr. Poole, and the answer was that the reverend incumbent of St. David's was a man of high standing, of considerable wealth, and whether he paid for or booked goods, a sale to any amount might be safely made to him.

Mr. Jones being now quite satisfied, made a very choice selection of jewellery, put up the various articles in cases, and enclosed the whole in a small hand portmanteau. The value of the goods was between £600 and £700. The shopman was despatched to St. James's-square, so as to reach the bishop's house exactly at ten o'clock the next morning. The Rev. Hezekiah Poole, however, was even more punctual—he had just reached the house five minutes before, as the shopman was informed by the hall porter, and had been shewn into the library until the bishop was at leisure to receive him.

The shopman was asked to walk into a side room, and in a minute or two the Rev. Hezekiah Poole came to him, and told him the young ladies were now in the drawing-room, and if he would wait a few minutes while he shewed them the samples of jewellery they were to choose from, he would rejoin him, and settle the little account at once. The reverend gentleman then called in one of the footmen, and requested him to carry the portmanteau, containing the jewellery, into the drawing-room.

The shopman waited patiently until an hour had elapsed, when, finding that the Rev. Hezekiah Poole did not make his appearance, he went into the hall, and requested the porter to take a respectful message to the reverend gentleman to the effect that, being expected in Regent-street, he could not wait much longer. The shopman was disagreeably surprised to learn from the porter that the reverend gentleman had left the bishop's residence about an hour back, taking with him the little portmanteau which the footman had been requested to carry to the drawing-room. He was perplexed at this information, and, on requesting to see the young ladies, he was told they had not been in town for some months. This astonished him still more, and he then requested to see the footman to whom the portmanteau had been entrusted. The footman, when called, had nothing more to state than that when he received the portmanteau and was taking it upstairs, the reverend gentleman stopped him, told him he would not trouble him to take the portmanteau any farther: he would call another time to

see the bishop. Having given his card and received the portmanteau, he went through the hall into the square. The shopman thought it advisable to seek an interview with the bishop. He was informed by his lordship that the Rev. Hezekiah Poole was personally unknown to him, that he had never benefitted the Rev. H. Poole in any way that he could remember, certainly not in the way detailed, and that therefore the Rev. H. Poole was not very likely to wish to shew his gratitude in the form of presents of jewellery to four young ladies, his daughters, as he happened to be blessed with only one.

The shopman went back to the jeweller with his strange story, and this induced Mr. Jones to make his way to the clerical tailor in Bond-street to ascertain some further particulars of his customer. The clerical tailor was equally astonished at what he was told; he admitted, however, that Mr. Poole was rather remarkable for eccentricity, but he had never heard that it had ever taken such a suspicious form before. Mr. Jones came away thoroughly puzzled; he thought, however, it would only be a proper precaution to go round to the various pawnbrokers and mention the circumstance, in case the eccentricity of Mr. Poole might lead him in that direction. To his dismay he found that the whole of the jewellery he had looked out with so much care was in the hands of three West-end pawnbrokers, having been pawned for about £200 by a clerical-looking gentleman, who, from the description, could have been no other than his eccentric customer himself. This made the matter all the more mysterious, and the receipt in

the evening of the following note did not tend in the least to ease the doubts and conjectures of Mr. Jones. The note was dated from Furnival's Hotel:—

"Mr. Jones,—Take no heed about your property; it is quite safe, and will be returned to you in a very few days. A call of charity has necessitated the immediate raising of a sum of money, and I am sure I need not remind you to whom you really lend when you lend to the poor. I am going down to my rectory, and will certainly make good the whole of your property by the end of the week.

"Hezekiah Poole, M.A."

The inspector having heard the statement of Mr. Jones, suggested that an application should be made at once to the sitting magistrate at the police-court. Mr. Long, the magistrate, was ready to grant a warrant, but, in order to avoid unnecessary scandal, the offender being a beneficed clergyman, it was suggested that the officer who served the warrant should be accompanied by some one from Mr. Jones's shop, who should first hear what explanation Mr. Poole had to give of his strange conduct, when, perhaps, the execution of the warrant would be unnecessary. The warrant was immediately obtained on this understanding, and Inspector Baker and Police-sergeant Gray, with the shopman of Mr. Jones, took the train, and very soon found themselves at Machynlleth, and at the rectory-house. It was arranged that the inspector should first have an interview, and, without disclosing his true character, mention the business he had come upon, and ask for an explanation.

In a few minutes the inspector rejoined his companions, and told them he had broached the subject to the reverend gentleman, but, instead of offering any explanation, the reverend gentleman threatened to call in the borough constable, and have him lodged in gaol as an impostor. It was then considered that all further courtesy or consideration should be at an end, and the inspector was instructed to execute the warrant forthwith. Accordingly, the shopman and the inspector went to the rectory, and demanded to see the rector. They had their wish in a twinkling, for Mr. Poole rushed out in a towering passion, and, calling his groom, desired him instantly to go for the borough reeve. The shopman stared; the reverend gentleman who now stood before him was *not* the Rev. Hezekiah Poole whom he was in quest of. The shopman entered into an explanation, which threw the reverend gentleman into a fit of laughter. Some clever thief had evidently been personating him—that is, to a certain extent. His name was Poole, but not Hezekiah; he was rector of St. Mary's, not St. David's; there was no parish of that name in the district; he had never spoken to the Bishop of Salisbury; and, what was still more conclusive, had not been in London for the last seventeen years. The shopman and the police had nothing to do for it but to apologise for the mistake—to put themselves into the first train, and to make their way back to London as expeditiously as possible.

"Did the jeweller," said I, "ever find out the thief?"

"Never," replied Gray; "but I think I could give a pretty safe guess who he was."

"Did he really belong to the Church?" said I.

"He certainly lived by the Church," said Gray, "that is, he got his living in churches. He was the 'Elephant.'"

I knew who the constable meant.

Some years ago a portly, sanctimonious-looking personage, dressed like a country parson, might be seen every Sunday in some one of the West-end churches—especially when a charity sermon was to be preached, and the "nobs" were likely to attend—with large prayer-book in hand and white cambric pocket-handkerchief displayed, devoutly making the responses in a particularly sonorous manner. As he was evidently a stranger—apparently a clergyman from the country—the doors of the best pews were readily thrown open to him. This went on for some time until the constant complaints of watches and purses missing drew attention to the new comer, who, finding the West-end get rather warmer than pleasant, the "Elephant"—for, in consequence of his bulk, he had acquired, and was only known by that *sobriquet*—made his way into the City, where the same kind of reputation followed him, and where he was at last apprehended for having possessed himself of one of the collecting plates at a charity sermon at Bow Church, his respectable appearance having misled the churchwardens, but where he was fortunately stopped by Leadbitter just as he was quietly making his way out of the church with the proceeds of a very successful collection.

CHAPTER XII.

THE ROBBERIES AT THE RUSSIAN AMBASSADOR'S.

A SERIES of mysterious robberies was perpetrated at the Russian Embassy at Chesham House, which for a long time baffled all the experience and researches of the police. The property stolen was not only of the most valuable description, but much of it was priceless, from the circumstance of it consisting of gold medals, decorations of honour, and presents from crowned heads to Baron Brunow. How the robberies were effected, and by whom perpetrated, for a long time could not be ascertained. All that the police were able to make out was, that on opera nights, when the Baron and Baroness were at the opera, some one contrived to gain access to the private apartments of the Baron and Baroness, and to carry off valuables or loose parcels of money. On one occasion it was the Baroness's boudoir that was visited, and then some costly piece of jewellery was missed. On another, it was the Baron's dressing-room that was entered, and the loose cash, or something of great value, purloined. On a third, the Secretary to the Embassy's rooms were robbed without the smallest trace of the thief being left to guide inquiries.

It was quite evident that the thief was not only well acquainted with the premises, but was also thoroughly aware of the movements of the family. The authorities of Scotland-yard were applied to, and the Commissioners appointed the best men among the

detectives to make an investigation. None of the constables employed could obtain the least clue to the perpetrators of the theft, and the Baron and Baroness became quite uneasy at the frequency of the thefts, and the impenetrable mystery in which they were shrouded. The Emperor of Russia about this time paid a visit to the Queen Victoria, and as he stayed at the Embassy for a day or two, double vigilance was used, but all to no purpose.

"It was a lucky thing for me," said Gray, then a serjeant in the C Division, "that the best men in the force were beaten, as it led to my promotion as inspector. It fell out this way. Inspector Baker and myself were about a jewel robbery at a large firm in Regent-street; we had been to Wales on the business, had returned, and had just got to the station-house in Vine-street, when information of a robbery at the Russian Embassy the previous evening was brought in.

"'Good God! another robbery,' said the Inspector; 'what is to be done? this must not go on; we shall have the Emperor robbed, and then the whole force will be in a pretty mess. Gray, you must take the matter in hand, and see what you can make of it.'

"I said at once, 'What can I do? all the crack men of the A's have tried and failed, and I don't like to touch the business, because it's most likely I shall fail, too.'"

"'You must try, however,' said Inspector Baker, 'Go to the Embassy, and see the Baron at once.'"

"I went," said Gray, "to Chesham House, and saw the Baron and Baroness. The Baron said he was quite uncomfortable at these repeated robberies, and hoped I would do what I could to detect the thief. I told the Baron I would make the attempt, but he must give me his assistance in any plan that I should suggest. The Baron replied, I was welcome to take any step I thought most advisable, and I might depend on his support. I asked permission to have all the servants brought together, that I might put questions to them. This was immediately granted, and accordingly all the servants were summoned to attend in the steward's room. Seventeen or eighteen male and female servants being assembled together, I told them there was a thief among them, and they must help me to find him out. All the servants professed to be quite ready to lend me all the aid in their power, and I accordingly began my questions. I asked the men if they had any visitors the evening before; they all denied that any one had called on them. I inquired of the women if they had any followers; they all declared they had no followers. There was one servant, Jane Walker, the housemaid, who was absent. I sent for her, and put the same questions to her. She declared that no one had been to the house except James Oliver, the steward's room-boy, who had been recently discharged, and who came there occasionally. He had merely called, about six o'clock, to say that Mary, one of the under housemaids, had won a Derby sweep, and then he went away. Mary, who was present, here burst out a-laughing, and said

that she had never put into a Derby sweep in her life, and that James must have been joking. The porter, Jones, said he recollected seeing the steward's room-boy go into the house by the back way, but it was later than six o'clock; it must have been eight o'clock; and one of the girls, who did not like the house beer, also recollected meeting James coming down the back stairs about that time, as she went to get half-a-pint of beer from the beer man when he called.

"Having ascertained that James Oliver lived in Carrington-street, and as the story about the Derby sweep turned out not to be true, it struck me that I had got a clue to the thief. I put on a white choker, to take off the police-constable air, and to look as much like a butler as possible, and went immediately to Carrington-street. James Oliver lived with his mother and sister, when I got to the house he was not at home, but was said to be somewhere in the neighbourhood, and it was uncertain when he would come in. I gave out, to prevent suspicion, that I had called to tell him of a situation, and that if he did not go after it at once, he would perhaps lose it. I pretended to be anxious for his advantage, and the mother thereupon told me I might perhaps find him at a watchmaker's named White. I went to White's, and was told that Oliver had been there, but had gone away about an hour before, and that he had mentioned he intended to call at a tailor's, named Benjamin, in White Horse-street, to get measured for a suit of clothes. I posted off to Benjamin's, and made inquiries after Oliver, and was asked what I

wanted with him, and why I came there to ask questions. I told Benjamin that I was Serjeant Gray, that a robbery had taken place at Baron Brunow's, and that Oliver was suspected. Benjamin said Oliver had been there that day, had paid him for a suit of clothes, and had left his old coat hanging up in the back shop. I got possession of the coat and examined it. In a secret pocket I found a package of duplicates, all of which related to property taken from the Baron at various times, and, in particular, the duplicate of a gold pencil-case, pledged at Masters', a pawnbroker, in Piccadilly, the preceding evening. This gold pencil-case was part of the articles last stolen, which consisted of a gold watch, about twenty sovereigns, and this pencil-case. The property had been stolen out of a drawer in the Baron's dressing-room.

"Being now on the right scent, I went back to Carrington-street, and waited for some time. I saw a young fellow enter the house, and being persuaded in my mind that this was Oliver, I knocked at the door and was admitted. I spoke to the young man, and pretended that I wanted him to go with me to Baron Brunow, to give him the particulars of a situation that would suit him. The young man, however, evidently suspected something, and declined to accompany me; he said I was mistaken—his name was not Oliver—it was Thompson.

"'Well,' said I, 'my name is Gray, Serjeant Gray of the C Division; you were at the Baron's last night—you spoke to the porter, Jones, and told him Mary had won the Derby sweep.'

"The young man strongly denied all this. I told him I would chance his being the Oliver I wanted and take him to the Baron's. I took him to the Embassy, and asked to see the Baron; as soon as the Baron came I produced the duplicates, and told how I became possessed of them and the information I had acquired.

"'Hah,' said the Baron, looking at my prisoner, 'this certainly is James Oliver, who was once in my service, and he must be the thief. Lock him up. I am happy you have found him out, as it will ease my mind and will give to the Baroness peace.'

"I called on Mr. Masters and brought him to the Embassy. When he saw Oliver he identified him immediately as the person who had pledged the pencil-case the previous evening. Having now sufficient evidence, I took Oliver to the station in Vine-street, and told the inspector all that had occurred. He was delighted at my success, more especially because all the crack detectives had previously failed.

"The duplicates found in Oliver's coat enabled the Baron to recover his medals and crosses, and this was more agreeable to the Baron than even the detection of the thief. Oliver was tried and convicted, but the Baron interceded for him, and he only got three months.

"As soon as the trial was finished the Baron sent for me, and said,

"'Mr. Gray, I am much pleased with you; the money which I now give will soon be spent; I must do something that will be good for you in another way.'

"The Baron kept his word. A day or two after-

wards I was sent for to Scotland-yard, and informed that, in consequence of Baron Brunow's representations, I was promoted to the rank of inspector."

CHAPTER XIII.

DEATH AND GLORY.

One of the most singular characters of the day, in a small way—some twenty years ago—was Dean, the Guard's tailor, of Savile-row. He was well known to all the officers of the Police-Court from the fact of his "bail" being always called into requisition whenever a "nob" got into trouble. At that time the West-End was noted for the nocturnal pranks of a set of aristocratic *roués*, at the head of whom was the Marquis of Waterford. As the exploits of these rich, reckless, and high-born, law-defiers, constantly brought them into personal contact with the police, the upshot, after desperate resistance, was pretty certain to end in one or two of the ring-leaders being lodged in the Vine-street Station-house.

Dean, the "swell" tailor, was the ready resource of them all. His bail was never refused at the station-house; and, of course, the parties whom he thus accommodated amply repaid the obligation in patronage and purse.

Dean, among his other untailor-like qualifications, was one of the most remarkable shots, either with pistol or rifle, I ever knew, and at 300 yards was safe for the bull's-eye — only one man in England being accounted his superior, and that one a collector to

a leading Fire Insurance Company. I have seen Dean, at Reilly's shooting gallery, in Oxford-street, with a given number of shots from a pistol, for a wager, cut out a circular piece from one of the ordinary shooting cards. He would fire a bullet through his thimble—tailors's thimbles are open at both ends—place a halfpenny against the iron target at the extremity of the shooting gallery, and, with a pistol, undertake to produce what he called a cocked hat or a coal-scuttle. This he effected by hitting the coin either in the centre or on the edge, the premeditated effect of the bullet being to bend the halfpenny into an exact resemblance of one or the other of those toy articles.

Being a "character," in his way, and as I was always on the look-out for "characters," I very soon became tolerably intimate, and gave him my custom. I was occasionally invited into his cutting-room, where I passed many an hour in listening to his "professional" experiences—some of which were of an exceedingly amusing character. I heard from his lips the secret of his rise from a journeyman to a master.

"This is the way it occurred, Sar," said Dean, in his peculiar magniloquent style of elocution; "I was with Jones and Fulham, of St. Martin's Lane, the fashioners of the Four-in-hand Club. No nob or gentleman belonging to the Club would wear a driving coat unless turned out by our firm. We had double-milled drab cloth made on purpose, and club buttons from our own mould, and the only six workmen in London who could properly turn out one of our matchless works of

art, were in the employ of that firm. 'I say works of art, Sar,' for, by my sacred heaven, there was nothing to come up to one of our bespoke driving coats in the whole civilized creation. Every cape, and there were six—not shams, but real capes—was double stitched; so were the seams, cuffs, and collars, and every button-hole was overcast and braided to match. Neither Stultz nor Buckmaster could hold a candle to us in this branch of our art, and there were only six journeyman artists to be found under the canopy of heaven who could execute one of our box coat orders. I was one, and Jack Callaghan, our captain, was another. We worked in a ring, Sar, and, so perfect was our style, that, when we brought together our parts of the garment, they matched so beautifully that there was not the difference of a stitch between us. That was what I call perfection, Sar; there's none of that work now, or, at least, you couldn't find a board of men, that is, six regular journeymen, to work so close together, as far as real talent went. Well, Sar, the Four-in-hands were to have a grand field-day, and several driving coats were to be all got ready, according to order, early in the morning. The meet was at Limmer's Hotel, at four o'clock, and, by George, Sar, at twelve o'clock that day, the Hon. George Wombwell drove up his Tilbury; he had just got to town on purpose to order his coat.

"'Jones,' says he to the governor, 'I must have my coat by four o'clock.'

"'Can't undertake it, Sir; should only disappoint!' says Jones.

"'Damme, Sir, you must let me have the coat. I'm going out with the club, and I can't shew among them without it; put all your men on it, and I'll pay double wages.'

"'Impossible,' said Mr. Jones; 'we guarantee to turn out a perfect garment in six hours, but you only give us four; so the thing's impossible.'

"'If the coat is not at Limmer's by four o'clock, I'll change my tailor,' says my gentleman, and he goes out of the shop in a towering rage.

"A sudden thought occurred to me. It was one of those lucky thoughts that make the fortune of a man, it was owing to that thought that I'm Dean, *the* Guard's tailor, and not Dean, the crack London cutter. I slipped off the board, bolted out after the Honourable George, Sar, and caught him just as he was getting into the Tilbury.

"'Beg pardon,' says I, 'but I think I could fit you by four o'clock, if you'll keep the thing *dark*.'

"'Can you?' says he, 'then you shall have twenty guineas, and if ever you start for yourself—my custom.'

"That was enough. I recollected we'd just sent a coat for the Hon. Jack Mytton to the Clarendon, but, as it was known he'd got a 'purler' at the Melton Hunt the day before which had knocked out his shoulder, and would prevent him from coming to town, I rushed off to Bond-street, saw his valet, tipped him a fiver, and got the coat. The two swells were about the same size. I knew that the coat would only want easing at the collar, and fine drawing here and there in body and sleeves. So

I chivied back to the governors, got the Honourable George's patterns from the cutting room on the sly, and went to hunt up my partners. They had all knocked off work, and were pretty well on to 'mops and brooms' at our house of call, in Sherrard-street. I found them there, and promised them two guineas a piece if they'd lend a hand. I took them to my lodgings, and, by George, Sar, we strapped at it, and got out the coat exactly to pattern, and the last seam pressed, just as it was about to strike four.

"I started off, and was at Limmer's before you could say Jack Robinson. The Hall was full of swells ready to start. The Honourable George was then in plain toggery, savage as a bear with a sore head, and had evidently given up his chance.

"'Dean, you rascal,' said he, 'I'll knock you down if you shew your d—— face here.'

"'Not before I've fitted on your coat, I hope,' says I, with a low bow.

"The coat was on in a jiffey, and a better fit was never turned out by the hand of mortal man.

"After that job I cut the governors, and was soon doing a roaring trade on my own account.

"But now," said he, "I must tell you about Jack Callaghan. He was the only man that ever flogged me at a button hole. Perhaps you don't know that the test of a first-rate workman is a white dress waistcoat."

"No," said I; "my notion of high-art tailoring certainly is not in that direction."

"It's a white waistcoat that really tries the talent of

a man—that points out the true genius. You see the stuff that marcella is made of is so tender that it breaks away with every stitch, unless you know how to handle the needle as a man of science ought to handle it. The button holes are the great difficulty. By my sacred honour, Sar, Jack Callaghan could put more talent in the button hole of a white waistcoat, than any other living man could put into a dress coat. We used to have prizes for the best work, and Jack was always the winner. He was a lushy cove, and, though he could earn his four and five guineas a week, he was always as poor as a church-mouse, and never had one shilling to rub against another. We had a prize match to come off. There were thirty entries, at half-a-guinea each, and, though Jack Callaghan had put his name down, nobody thought he could send in a garment, for he was in the last stage of consumption, and was all but blind from inflammation in the eyes, brought on by drink and fine work. I felt sure of winning, for I'd a lady's hand at a button hole, light, steady, and firm as a rock. I bought a yard of the finest French cambric I could find. I picked it to pieces, and with the ravelling I worked the button holes. The idea of the French cambric was all my own. By George, Sar, the work—it was a picture, there wasn't anything to come near it by chalks when I showed—the others all gave in at once, and I felt cock sure of the prize. By George, Sar, what do think, just as the judges were about to make the award, who should come staggering in but Jack Callaghan's wife, with a bag.

"'What have you there,' says the foreman.

"'It's my poor Jack'swork; he would not give up his chance, though the doctor told him it would be his death.'

"The waistcoat was produced, and I saw that my chance was gone. By George, Sar, there never was anything, before or since, like it. The work when examined through a microscope was without a flaw—it was like fairy stitch every way, and everybody was in raptures. Jack had unpicked a piece of Brussels lace worth five guineas a yard, and had worked the button-holes with the thread.

"The first prize was awarded to him unanimously, and the second prize, the waistcoat, was given to me.

"I took the money that evening to Jack at his lodgings in Compton-street. The room was as bare and as dirty as a pig-stye. There I found Jack lying on a ragged mattrass covered with a ragged quilt, with both eyes bandaged up.

"'Jack, my boy,' said I, 'you've won the prize; here's the fifteen guineas.'

"'Give it the old woman,' says he, 'it will help to bury me. I've put my last stitch in that waistcoat—give us your hand, Dean, for I can't see you, I'm stone-blind—my sight's gone—but I'll die as I've lived, at the top of the tree.'

"By George, Sar, it was a fact; he'd sat up to work this waistcoat, though both eyes were in a frightful state of inflammation; and when he'd finished, he went as blind as a brick-bat. It was his last stitch—his death stitch, I may say—for he died that very night; but he died like a trump in the arms of victory."

CHAPTER XIV.

MY FIRST EXPERIENCE OF PUBLIC EXECUTIONS.

Calling at the *Weekly Dispatch* one day, the editor, Mrs. Samuel Smith, requested me to go down to Winchester for his paper, to furnish the details of a series of executions fixed to take place the following Saturday, towards which public attention was strongly directed.

It was just at that precise period when an agrarian revolution was impending, when agrarian riots and outrages were taking place pretty nearly in every county, but more particularly in Hampshire. The redoubtable "Swing," the English "Captain Rock," without the Hibernian murderous element, was then carrying terror through many an agricultural district. Stacks and farm-buildings were nightly fired, threatening notices were scattered about or sent through the post; mobs of agricultural labourers assembled by day and by night, visiting farm-houses and parsonages with a view of compelling the terrified occupants to enter into an agreement to lower rents and tithes. The only excuse—and it is a tolerably ample one—for these lawless assemblages of rude peasants and their summary proceeding, was to be found in the undeniable fact that the labouring agricultural population were miserably off. Their condition had been deteriorating for some years past; they had been, for the most part, turned out of farm-houses to herd in cottages not fit for any animal less nice than a pig; their wages had been reduced bit by bit, until

even in the most liberal counties the maximum, after reaching starvation point, was only kept from going below that sum upon which human nature could sustain life through the aid of workhouse relief. Beer-shops had just been established, and were doing their evil mission in further debasing the labourer; Chartists and other professional agitators had taken advantage of the peculiar aspect of the times to ventilate their revolutionary doctrines and dogmas; political and social questions, of a novel import, were unhinging society; the hour looked dark, and at hand there were abundance of desperate men ready to take advantage of any combination of circumstances which should result in mob law becoming more powerful than the law of the land.

Such was the period to which I refer. Government was quite alive to the danger, and quite prepared to put it down at any cost.

I shall not go minutely into details; it will be sufficient to state that all classes who had property to lose —especially the land-owner and land-occupier—combined for mutual protection, and with Government support, proceeded to deal by the strong hand with the lawless mobs wherever they encountered them. The result of this rigour was, that several hundreds of poor, half-starved devils were apprehended and lodged in the Hampshire gaols. A special commission was organised to try the rioters; and at the close of the commission, there were some scores sentenced to transportation, and six to death by hanging.

To describe effectively the scene which the principal

street of Winchester presented to the spectator night and day, would be utterly impossible. The sight was most piteous. Women and children frantic with grief at losing fathers, brothers, husbands—the only shield betwixt them and starvation or the workhouse. Sobs and shrieks were heard on every side, and those who were eye witnesses of the painful exhibition, could not fail to retain a vivid recollection of its harrowing character to the latest moment of existence.

I am not going to pronounce an opinion one way or other; but this I will say, that had my case been that of the desperate and ignorant offenders, my conduct, I fear, would have very much resembled theirs. They felt the pinch; they had not intelligence or information enough to guide them to a true perception of the causes; they looked only to their taskmasters, and to the "light that led astray" from their revolutionary instructors, and they adopted the readiest means—the only means in their power—that of intimidation, brute force, and destruction of property—to redress their real and fancied injuries, and to better their position.

Among the six left for execution was a youth, whose case excited general comment and commiseration. He had formed one of a lawless mob who had gone round to the different farmers, and while in illegal procession, had been encountered by one of the Barings, who, being a county magistrate, went personally among the rioters, and laid hold of this juvenile Jack Cade. This was not a wise act, one would think; it naturally provoked resistance, and the lad struck his captor. The lad was

among those who were eventually lodged in prison, and as it was intended by the special commission to strike a decisive blow against this kind of assemblages—he having clearly been proved to have assaulted a magistrate, one of the leading gentry of the district—it was determined to make an example of him. The public feeling was strongly roused in favour of this culprit. His youth, and the circumstances under which he had been impelled to commit the assault, were looked upon as so many reasons why mercy should be extended to him, and up to the last it was hoped that he would receive the lenity of the Crown. The fatal day approached—no reprieve reached Winchester gaol; but as it was conjectured a rescue might be attempted, the constabulary and the soldiery were organized so as to be ready to act at a moment's notice.

I am writing from memory; and as thirty years of varied scenes and adventures have not particularly strengthened recollection, I may be at fault in the minor particulars, but in the essentials I know I am correct. When the proposition to attend was made to me I embraced it, for though I had a natural repugnance towards such scenes, yet, as I felt pretty sure that my "press" engagements would oblige me to make myself personally familiar with them, I thought the present was a favourable opportunity to begin my studies in this direction.

Accordingly I undertook the business, and made immediate arrangements to coach it as far as Winchester. I went by mail, and I shall never forget the cheerless journey that cheerless night. It was about the fall of

the year; the night was sleety and foggy. I travelled outside by way of economy, and I passed seven or eight as uncomfortable hours as it was possible to conceive. I well remember, as we approached Winchester, that the guard pointed out in different directions six or seven incendiary fires. Batches of ragged and half-drunken farm labourers were to be seen congregated at every beer-shop and road-side public-house we passed. All wore a truculent and desperate look—not like the olden time honest English labourer, but a compound of poacher and hedge ruffian.

About four o'clock in the morning we got to Winchester. I engaged a bed immediately, as I was numbed with cold, and having ascertained from Boots that the execution was fixed for eight o'clock, I gave strict orders to be called an hour beforehand, in order that I might be present at the fearful ceremony. I had hardly thawed myself by the aid of the genial help of the blankets, and was just going off into an uneasy doze, when I heard the tolling of a bell. I listened—the toll was at measured intervals, and at once I surmised that it was the knell of the victims. I jumped out of bed, dressed myself quickly, and ran towards the prison. I could not gain admittance. The gates were barred, and not even the usual open sesame of "the press" was available in this instance. The truth was, that the county authorities, acting, I presume, with the sanction of the Home Office and the judges, had arranged matters so as to carry out the executions two hours before the time publicly fixed. This was done to defeat any attempt,

should it be made by the country people, to obstruct the proceedings.

I made a circuit of the prison, and quite at the back, in an unfrequented and solitary lane, I found half a dozen stragglers assembled. I learned from them that only two of the six who had been sentenced were to be executed. Justice had relented at the eleventh hour—the public voice through the public journals had caused this change. One of the two was the lad to whom I have already alluded; the other was a travelling tinker, about the worst and most notorious character in the district. Day was breaking, and this enabled me to see, just peering above the high wall of the prison, a gallows, with a couple of ropes suspended from it. After contemplating these preparations for a few minutes, my ears suddenly caught the sounds of subdued wailing and mortal suffering. In another instant, two heads were slowly protruded above the wall. They were those of the youth and the tinker. The fatal cap was on, but not yet drawn over their faces; their hands were pinioned, their throats bare, and they were evidently already beginning to experience the "bitterness of death." Nothing else could be heard but low agonizing cries of "Oh, Lord, have mercy—oh, Christ, have mercy upon us." These cries were repeated incessantly, drowning the murmured prayers and exhortations of the clergyman who attended them to the scaffold. The rope was placed round their necks, and as they stood for a moment paralyzed with dread, I was struck with the contrast their appearance presented. The lad was ghastly pale, and shaking as if struck with

ague. The face of the tinker—naturally swarthy—was absolutely blue, as if in the last stage of Asiatic cholera; and his eyes, with nothing but the whites visible in his strong agony, gave him an appearance fearful to contemplate.

The hangman noiselessly approached, drew the caps closely over both faces; the cries ceased, the minister of God raised his voice in prayer, gradually receding from the platform until he reached a firm resting place. The bolt was then suddenly withdrawn, the two bodies dropped sheer down for a few feet, checked sharply by the rope, and in ten minutes all was over; but not until the death-struggles of both were frightfully visible beneath the tight-fitting cotton cap. A loud and deep groan from the few who were present concluded this dreadful exhibition.

I made my way back to the inn too much unnerved to sleep. The vain supplications and fearful death struggles of the wretched victims haunted me all day, and even at this distant period rise to my mind's eye as vividly as if the occurrence had passed only yesterday.

When I got to town with my report, a good deal of disappointment was manifested at the comparatively meagre report. The "execution" was to be the great "feature" of the journal for that week. It was shorn of much of its interest by the unexpected reprieve which four out of the six condemned offenders had received; and, of course, the expected harvest of additional copies was not fully reaped.

CHAPTER XV.

THE "BLACK MISSIONARY."

THE extent of daily impositions on the benevolent in London is incredible: the total amount of misdirected charity is as difficult to credit. All doubt about these matters would be dissipated by a visit to the Mendicity Society's offices in Red Lion-square, or an hour's conversation with one of the Mendicity Society's constables. The ten thousand forms in which the science of "fraudulent begging" disguises itself are a proof, on the one hand, of the inexhaustible fund of benevolence and, may we add, without meaning offence, credulity, that exists among the wealthy classes; and, on the other, of the endless resources which the tribe of impostors have at command to attain their object. Street beggars form a very insignificant portion of the London begging brotherhood. The sum total of their daily collections, though very large, sinks into utter insignificance when placed beside the amount obtained by the fraternity of begging-letter writers. Nineteen-twentieths of the street-beggars are Irish, principally women with young children, sent over on speculation, with their husbands, to try for work, or to effect a "settlement," or to exercise their habitual trade of begging—anything, in fact, calculated to remove from Irish localities the proper burthen of supporting its own poor. The street beggars are hardly worth a word of notice; the police and the society's officers are quite enough to

keep down their numbers, and to prevent them from becoming more than an annoyance, though no organization of authority could ever be so complete as to clear the streets effectually.

But that class known as the "begging-letter writers" and "begging-petition impostors" are the real nuisances and brigands of society—numerous, daring, and inventive. It is only in England that such a class could thrive and flourish. The English race, especially the wealthy English, are full of charity; there is more money given away in London in one day than in any dozen of European capitals in a year. If the extent of private charity is illimitable, the modes of imposition are correspondingly numerous. I was very soon made aware of this fact by my daily experience at the police-court. That experience inspired me with a deep reverence for the charitable tendencies of my countrymen; at the same time it led me to deplore the extent to which imposition was carried, and to endeavour, as far as my humble powers extended, by the aid of the press, to expose and to check it whenever a tale presenting features of cunningly-manufactured distress came under my notice.

Before I would give publicity to a tale of destitution, however plausibly and circumstantially related, I took care to ascertain that it was genuine in character, and that the party to be benefitted was deserving of assistance. I have the great satisfaction of knowing that, while I have been the instrument of obtaining substantial and frequently effective relief in many truly necessitous cases,

I have also been the means of unmasking premeditated hypocrisy and defeating the well-laid plans of impostors. It would be quite as well if the same precautions were always used before tales of apparent hardship and poverty were given to the public. Such is the latent and inexhaustible fund of benevolence in London, that it only wants a word to be called into boundless activity. It is only necessary for a tale of woe to find its way into the public journals for money to flow towards the sufferer in all directions. Donations pour in from every quarter, and a sum is sometimes thus got together which frequently affords efficient relief for the remainder of the recipient's life.

It not unfrequently occurs, with all the care and caution that can be exercised, that the unworthy are among these recipients of charity. Had their stories been properly investigated, the relators would have been found worthless characters and rank impostors. I do not think, however, that the Marlborough-street Police-court, for the thirty years, at least, during which I have been the recognised contributor to the morning journals, has had anything to complain of in the way of imposition on the benevolent. I do not recollect a single case in which donors of charitable subscriptions have had reason to regret the way their bounty was applied. There was one particular description of cases to which I never could turn a deaf ear. It was the "casuals," not the sturdy, hale, and lazy beggar, but the broken-down, out-of-work labourer—the homeless and foodless, through sickness or inability to obtain employment—the miser-

able woman with a miserable train of children—in fact, that numerous body of temporary paupers who could establish no claim to permanent workhouse relief, or who, if relieved, were put off with the miserable dole of a loaf of bread. In winter especially, the crowd of casuals becomes painfully enlarged, and it was in this direction, in the fear of the urgent necessities of the applicants being overlooked, that I usually did my best to obtain a welcome pittance from the funds of the poor-box. The press was never backward in seconding these efforts. A hint that the poor-box required replenishing always found ready publicity, with a ready response on the part of the wealthy.

The amount of permanent good which a judicious donation from the poor-box has effected, and still effects, in hundreds of cases annually, would hardly be believed. At one period destitute "casuals" were so numerous as seriously to interfere with the regular business of the court. The magistrates could not be expected to take upon themselves the duties of the relieving officer; nor could the police, on whom devolved the task of inquiring into the cases and characters of applicants, be expected to give up so large a portion of their time without remuneration.

The practice of giving relief, as a rule, from the poor-box has been discontinued, but of course when cases of real distress come spontaneously under the notice of the bench, the funds, and they are always tolerably ample, are made available. There is here a wide field for the exertions of the charitable, but there are many obvious reasons why it would be improper

to make the police-court a common resort to the indigent.

If the cases of *real* distress that came before the court were many, the charges of fictitious and fraudulent poverty were even more. "Begging-letter writing" is a kind of profession. Every sort of device calculated to touch the feelings is pressed into the service of the begging-letter impostors, and a curious book might be written on the various and cleverly contrived modes adopted to obtain money from parties of known benevolence. The principal head-quarters of professional begging-petition "writers," who kept an assortment of petitions and simulated cases of distress on hand to suit all customers, and who were paid according to length, novelty, and pathos, were established in Buckridge-street, before it was pulled down, and Short's-gardens. The begging-letter "impostors" mostly lived in Westminster, Pye-street being their favourite locality. A regular list of noblemen and gentlemen, and especially of charitable ladies, was kept by all the fraternity. This list was prepared from private information, from newspapers, and from the published reports of charitable institutions. The "soft" part of every donor was accurately gauged, and petitions and applications were ingeniously framed and specially adapted to the idiosyncrasy of parties to be imposed upon. It was this class that kept the Mendicity Society most actively employed. Several of the officers were occupied principally in hunting up these impostors, and baffling their schemes of imposition. With all their vigilance, the officers

were only enabled to prevent a small portion of the daily frauds. The publicity, however, given to such cases by the press has done a very great deal of good; for, though it has not succeeded in wholly extirpating the breed, it has very much thinned their numbers.

I have already introduced William Horsford to the notice of my readers in one character; I will give an instance of his ingenuity in his own special line.

"The cleverest fellow that ever I came across," said Horsford, "was 'Black Sam,' the West India pogram. He took up the 'pious' dodge, and used to get no end of money out of ladies and gentlemen who were known to have a religious turn. He called himself the 'West India Missionary,' and gammoned the nobs that he'd been a slave in Jamaica, and used to worship Obi and Mumbo Jumbo, but having been converted, he had come to England to get subscriptions that he might go back and convert his brother blacks in the West Indies. He bagged a lot of money to pay for printing a volume of his nigger sermons, though he could neither read nor write. Then he got up a committee of kind old ladies who subscribed to supply the naked blackies with breeches, and their wives with petticoats, as he made out that the planters made them work in broad daylight in the plantations in Adam's and Eve's birthday suits. Black Sam had been a valet, but having robbed his master, he ran away, and got a berth as cook on board one of the African traders. Being always drunk, he was discharged at the docks, and then he set up the missionary business. I was on his trail for at least two

years, but he always managed to give me the slip, and worked in such an artful way that I never could get properly hold of anything strong enough to make a sure case against him. The Mendicity received above two hundred letters from noblemen, gentlemen, and ladies, whom he had imposed on, and from the way the parties were 'done,' he must have made at least ten pounds a week regularly. I've followed him sometimes for a whole day together, when I knew he was out 'at work,' but it was no go; he managed his business so cleverly, by the help of a couple of "marms" whom he went about with, that I never could get near enough to grab him. I missed him, however, all at once, but the society soon found that he'd only gone in the country, and was turning in the "tin" in prime style. The manager begged hard that I'd make it my business to look after him, as the society had a case at last that would help to a conviction, the gentleman who had been imposed upon having written to say he was ready, when we could take the 'missionary,' to come forward and give evidence.

"One morning the manager handed me a letter from this gentleman, dated from Fitzroy-square, enclosing a petition from the 'missionary,' who was to call for an answer the following morning. My plan was to personate the gentleman, and to get Blackey to call at the house. I asked Bostock, a brother constable, to keep a look-out at one end of the square, while I took charge of the other. It wouldn't do to go in our own clothes, for though Black Sam didn't know us, he was too 'wide awake' to do any business if he thought he was dodged;

and he was so wide awake that he never would make his calls until he saw the street clear, and had one of his scouts at each end to give him the 'office,' if any of us showed on his track. As I pretty well knew where he 'hung out,' I was watching for him early. About eleven o'clock he came along, rigged like a parson—a prime new suit of black, a white choker, and a broad-brimmed tile. He had with him a small leathern bag, in which he kept his sermons and subscription-lists, and under one arm he'd got a large Bible.

"The appointment was for half-past eleven, and at that time I was ready for him. I made myself look like a sporting gentleman—got a straw hat, with a bit of ribbon round it, and a shooting-jacket. In the square I stowed away with the gardener a game-bag and a fowling-piece. I watched the whole party into a public-house in Clipstone-street; there, while they had a 'dram' a-piece, I heard Black Sam tell one of the women to get three pounds of rump-steak and plenty of baked potatoes, and have the lot ready by one o'clock, when he would join them in the public-house.

"I went out and got to the square before the 'missionary,' and had just time enough to get myself in proper 'fig,' to put on my game-bag, get a cigar alight, and mark half a sovereign, so as to know it again. Presently I saw my missionary come into the square, walk all the way round it, and look down all the streets; when he had satisfied himself that no one of a suspicious appearance was on the watch, he goes up the steps of the house he had appointed to call at, and rings the

bell. I opened the gate of the square, which was just opposite, and came out, smoking my cigar, and looking as if all the square belonged to me. Blackey stared for a minute, but didn't 'tumble' to me; so I walked up to him, and said, with as grand a manner as I could put on,

"'Haw—well, friend, what's your business here?'

"'You am de master ob dis yar house, I s'pose, Sar?' says he.

"''Spect I am,' said I; 'so if you've any business with the master, you must be precious quick, as I'm off on a shooting trip in the country. I only came home last night to give a kind missionary gentleman as is going out to convert the niggers, a trifle, who wrote a letter about it to me yesterday.'

"'Hah—yas, Sar, I am dat misshonar, Sar, who want to save all de soul of his benighted brudder blacks. I write dat letter, Sar. What you please to gib, Sar?'

"'Can't give more than half a sov. to begin with,' said I; 'here it is, if it's any use to you.'

"'Tank you—ten million tousand tanks,' said he, pulling out a memorandum-book. 'I lay dis money up-stairs in Hebben for you bi'mbye. When I say all my prayer dis night what is de name of de good gentleman wot gib charity to de poor black dat I shall mention to de Lord?'

"'Oh,' said I, 'you may just say Bill Horsford, of the Mendicity——'

"'Eh, you name Horsford,' said the missionary, jumping back and grinning like an ourang-outang.

"'Yes, Blackey,' said I, 'I'm Bill Horsford; your little game's up. I've been after you a precious long time, and I've nibbled you at last. You may as well come quietly, or it will be all the worse for you.'

"But Blackey was too game to be taken so easily; and before I could guard myself, he up with his big Bible, gave me a regular topper, which floored me, and started off like a lamplighter. I got on my legs, and 'chivy'd' him round the square; and though I could run above a bit, he could run faster; and I'm blest if I don't think he would have got clear away if he hadn't run against Bostock, who gave him his toe as he passed him, and sent him flying into a grocer's shop, where we took him.

The magistrate gave him three months on two separate cases; and I took charge of his travelling-bag, and have had since many a hearty laugh over the contents, especially the letters from the charitable ladies who belonged to the 'breeches' club; and the 'sermons,' which, I was told, had been prigged out of Jeremy Diddler, or Taylor, or some such name."

CHAPTER XVI.

A GREAT ACTOR MARRED.

A SHABBY-GENTEEL young fellow stopped me one morning in Regent-street, and calling to my recollection an introduction at Horsham a year or two back, put into my hand some tickets for his benefit, and solicited a subscription. I purchased one, and as the meeting

recalled to my mind a rather remarkable passage in my history, I will here relate it.

I have already stated that in the days of early youth I had secretly perpetrated several literary enormities, amongst the most prominent of which was a tragedy. Of course, the transition from writing a tragedy to acting it was, at that unreflecting period of life, natural and easy. A notion took forcible possession of me, that the germs of possible histrionic eminence ought not to be entirely discarded from the catalogue of my multifarious accomplishments, and that all that was wanted to astonish and delight a discriminating public, was a propitious opportunity for its development and display. The theatre took up a good deal of my spare time. The merits of the leading actors became familiar topics at the "Ben Jonson," and the result of our discussions was thoroughly to satisfy my mind that those merits, however great and popular, were not of such unattainable perfection as to preclude the possibility, some day, of some genius as yet *incog.*, to whom I thought I could give a name, coming forward to rival, or even to surpass, the best of them.

This idea was very much strengthened by occasional visits to the "Harp," in Russell-street, then, and possibly now, the head-quarters of minor theatre celebrities broken-down and worn-out actors, and actors out of luck and money. I had undergone proper initiation into the mysteries of "Making a Buffalo," had paid the dues to the "City of Lushington," and contributed more than once to the fugitive occupants to the "Suicide ward." The old

frequenters of the "Harp" will need no explanation; it will suffice to tell the race of moderns that the regular "buffalo" had the right of *entrée* to the club-room, located on the first floor of the tavern, which club-room, on stated nights, was tenanted by as motley a group as ever congregated beneath some soot-begrimed ceiling. Here might be found the second-rate actor, waiting for an engagement, or who had subordinate engagements at some of the Royals; here also would be found the country actor, almost shoeless, nearly shirtless, and quite penniless, whose privilege it was to take his place in that portion of the room christened by the name of "Suicide ward;" and in virtue of this expressive confession of destitution, become entitled to the charitable contributions of brother actors and visitors.

One of the steady frequenters of the "Harp" was an actor adopting the stage-name of Waldegrave. He was a large-framed, well-built man, with strong, prominent features, bushy eyebrows and whiskers—the model melo-dramatic ruffian of minor theatres. He possessed no mean ability as an actor; he had "come out" in the country, had already been one season on the London boards, and might have made a respectable position for himself had it not been for an unconquerable *penchant* for strong ale and neat gin. From him I learned a good deal concerning the "profession," and, amongst other things, that an accommodating gentleman named Sim, who called himself a "theatrical agent," was the usual medium through which aspirants for histrionic fame had obtained theatrical engagements.

After debating the matter over with myself, I resolved to pay the agent a visit, take his opinion of my theatrical capacity, and possibly be guided by his advice. Accrdingly, one morning, I made my way to his "office," which was within a stone's cast of the "Harp," and throwing open the door, I walked in with an air meant to be at once self-possessed and impressive. I found myself in a "chair-lumbered closet," stuck round with penny theatrical prints, and face to face with the great man himself, who, with one leg raised on a stool, and pen in hand, was about to reach down a file of papers on the shelf above him.

"Mr. Sim, I presume," said I. "If quite at leisure, should be glad to have a few minutes' conversation."

Mr. Sim never moved a muscle. With leg still poised and pen behind the ear, he kept his eyes with a hard stare on me, without at first vouchsafing a word. His unwavering look made me descend from my stilts—he was the master of the situation in a moment, and he saw it.

"I took the liberty of calling," said I, with a less lofty air, "on a little theatrical business."

"I knew it, young man," said he, pointing to a framed set of rules, "read, Sir. One guinea entrance fee, two guineas on completion of engagement—them's my terms. I'm a man of business, and time is money."

I drew out a guinea and deposited it on the desk.

"Name," said he, curtly.

"Put me down as Jonathan Potts. I use this name throughout, being quite as euphonious as my own."

Having made an entry in his pocket-ledger with imperturbable gravity, he signed towards a seat, and then placing his chair opposite to mine, said blandly,

"Town or country engagement?"

This was plunging *in medias res* with a vengeance; but, conceiving that I was fairly in for it. I asked,

"Are you quite sure I am looking for either?"

"Quite," said he, promptly. "The great Sam Johnson used to say that a gentleman might be discovered by the way he put down his hat. I knew you for an actor by the way you opened the door."

"You are at fault for once," said I; "for I have never yet been on the stage."

"Don't care a fig about that," said he, "you may turn knife-grinder—you may become Archbishop of Canterbury or Prime Minister, but take my word—Dick Sim's word—if so, there will be a first-rate actor spoilt."

I felt that this unsolicited and discriminating testimony to my externals was very encouraging; it induced me to unbosom myself rather more freely than I first intended. I told him of the tragedy—he shook his head—I told him of the universal applause I had gained at the "Harp" on the night of my initiation, after standing additional "goes" all round, by my recitation of King John's soliloquy, which Waldegrave and other good judges asserted surpassed Macready, who they all swore could not have given it with the same effect.

"Jack Waldegrave? Best judge of acting in

England," said he; "sad dog, though—too fond of drink. Might have had one of the 'Royals' at his foot, but he won't work. Mind you don't follow in his wake. How do you want to begin—comic or tragic line?"

"Tragedy," said I, rather gingerly.

"Right; quite right; fine eye for tragedy, good figure for the stage; make your fortune in no time; but mind, if you want to get to the top of the tree, you must study—study like a brick. How old?"

In consideration of an incipient pair of whiskers, I thought I might venture to clap on a year or two, so I replied,

"Twenty-one."

"Best age in the world—not too young for study, nor too old to learn. What sort of an engagement would you like: what figure do you calculate upon getting?"

Calling to recollection that Kean and Macready had their fifty guineas a-night, but feeling conscious, whatever might be the case hereafter, that I was not *yet* either a Kean or Macready, I named the moderate sum of four or five guineas a week, to begin with.

"Four or five guineas a week!" with a slight laugh, and a look, as I thought, of contempt. "Ha! Ha! pooh, pooh! throw yourself away—can't allow it. Suppose, now, you should make a hit—and, my young friend, forty years' experience of the stuff actors are made of enable me to predict you *will* make a hit. Well, suppose, I say, you have made a hit, you will be

down on poor Dick Sim for tying you up—letting the manager make his fortune out of you, and then, when your engagement is over, kicking you off like a pair of old boots. No, no, my young friend, a *share* company is the thing for you. I've a dozen openings here," tossing over a pile of papers with his pen, "and nothing good enough. But I'll fit you, or my name is not Dick Sim. You shall hear from me in a day or two; you'll find me a man of business. Good morning!"

I retired from the presence of this dispenser of fame and fortune, much pleased with the interview. I had hardly gone a dozen steps before I encountered my theatrical friend, Waldegrave. There was a look of provoking intelligence about him; he had seen me come out of the agent's office.

"Come, come, my boy, no secrets among friends—you've seen Sim."

I confessed to the fact.

"Why didn't you tell me you were going?" said he, in a tone of gentle reproach. "I can do anything I like with him. I know the old fox of old; he'll take a young fellow's guinea, and then tell him to go and pump dung into a butcher's cart. He's too particular. He won't see anybody a second time."

"I don't think that will be my case!" said I, modestly, "he spoke rather favourably, and promised that I should hear from him in a day or two."

"Did he?—then your fortune's made. He's the best eye for a new actor in the world. Give us your

hand, brother Buskin, and let's go to the 'Harp' and wet your commission in a pot.

"'All *ale*, Macbeth—I can *beer* it no longer.'"

With this piece of facetiousness he dragged me into the "Harp," and the pot of ale became two, before I contrived to get rid of his company. A morning or so after this I received a note, couched with Spartan-like brevity:—

"At ten be at my office, without fail.—SIM."

I was punctual to the appointment. The agent received me with open arms.

"Here, my boy—Luck was your godfather, I'm sure. Here's a letter from my friend Thompson, begging me to engage, on *any* terms, a 'first appearance' for his share-company. I've booked you. Pay the two pounds ten, and start on Monday."

"Two pounds ten!" said I, "why, the sum was to be two guineas."

"Two pounds ten," said he. "Something additional for letters and postages."

"Two guineas," I repeated.

"Not a farthing less," said he. "You are to 'star' in the country—then come back to London with your laurels about you and a Sussex heiress, and make your own terms with the London managers."

True, most true, thought I, as I paid down the money, "better not let a few paltry shillings stand betwixt me and my brilliant future."

I took the letter—it was a vile scrawl, but I did not think much of that; the contents satisfied my

expectations. "The Royal Horsham Theatre" was to open with a new company, new decorations, and a new actor; one vacancy only remained, open only to a first-rate genius, who had never yet put in an appearance on any stage. Fortune seemed to have provided the very opening for me at the very nick of time. I paid the fifty shillings joyfully, and received a memorandum of engagement from the agent, who shook me by the hand, and wished me luck.

"For," said he, "you'll be the lion of the county; you'll be the envy of the young swells; and all the rich heiresses—for it's a plummy place for them—will run after you."

When I quitted the office I must confess the sudden change in my future rather confused me. I had made a great jump in the dark; but I consoled myself by thinking, at least, that my "lines" had fallen in "pleasant places." I determined, however, to do nothing rashly; and felt fully resolved to see and judge for myself.

The next morning, a well-filled portmanteau, ten one-pound bank notes, and my humble self, were on the top of the Brighton coach, booked direct for Horsham. My ruminations on the coach were, I fear, a little extravant.

That I should astonish the Horshamites I felt no manner of doubt; that I should become the *lion* of the county had already been predicted; and as for the Sussex heiresses, I determined not to be too rash or hasty in my pick. The coach stopped at the

Anchor Inn, and I descended. Having refreshed myself with a glass of sherry and a biscuit, I called the waiter.

"Town pretty full?" said I.

"Pretty well, Sir, on market days and 'sizes."

"Very gay now, I suppose?"

"Why, no," said he; "can't say much as to that."

"Where's your theatre?"

"Theayter! We ain't got no theayter hereabouts as ever I heerd on."

"Nonsense, man," said I; "the Royal Horsham Theatre is to open on Tuesday next; whereabouts is it?"

"Oh, aye, now I think a bit, I heerd summut about it. They'll know at the 'Black Jug.'"

"And where's the 'Black Jug?'" said I.

"It's at bottom of the lane, just outside town. Anyone belonging to these parts will show you."

"Well," said I, "get some rump-steaks ready at four precisely. I shall most likely bring a friend or two to dine with me."

The waiter promised to be punctual, and I set out on my search for the "Black Jug," somewhat wondering, I must confess, at the waiter's indifference or stupidity.

CHAPTER XVII.

A GREAT ACTOR MARRED—CONTINUED.

I TOOK a survey of the town, and was much pleased with what I saw. There was a fair number of very good shops and genteel houses, and the market-place, in particular, wore a look of neatness and business. In the immediate neighbourhood of the town, numerous gentlemen's seats were visible, and, altogether, there was a general appearance of property and respectability, which satisfied me that the "Royal Horsham Theatre" was likely to be well supported, especially when a new "London Star" was announced to shine in the Sussex firmament. The town, I considered, would always furnish playgoers enough to fill the pit and gallery; the residences of the gentry would contribute an appropriate and sufficient audience for the boxes.

I could have wished that the theatre had been in the town itself, but when I reflected that by-and-bye the nightly influx of country folks might be inconvenient, and that the phalanx of carriages would require room, I acquiesced in the prudence which had located the building in the suburbs. I did not expect to find a Covent Garden, or even an Adephi; but I pictured to myself a neat stone erection, with, possibly, a portico in front, a carriage-drive to the boxes, and proper and separate arrangements for pit and gallery frequenters. My thoughts diverged to matters somewhat more personal. I thought it not impossible that the great "hit" pre-

dicted by such infallible judges as my friends, Sim and Waldegrave, was not in the least out of the range of probability. I drew a picture—in fancy— of a certain successful *débutant*—pit and gallery in uproarious applause—boxes, with more aristocratic taste, waving handkerchiefs, perhaps showering *bouquets* on the stage in token of the delight which an original and striking personification of the "philosophical Hamlet," the "midnight murderer, Macbeth," or the "love-sick Romeo," had yielded them. I thought, too, of the tolerably certain accession of funds to the treasury, and of the welcome proportion which, as a "share proprietor," would become mine by right and agreement.

I have already said I was totally without personal vanity—a piece of unnecessary candour I hope my readers will give me full credit for—I had plenty of youthful enthusiasm, but no vanity, not any, at least, that I could ever discern. I could not help remarking, however, the little sensation my appearance in the main street of quiet Horsham appeared to create. It was somewhat mortifying to my *amour propre* certainly, but having just read in the newspapers that the "great Duke" himself had wandered *incog.* through Coventry, and that the mayor and council had been ready to pitch into Peeping Tom himself at their obtuseness in not having recognised the "hero of a hundred fights," I consoled myself in the same way, doubtless, the illustrious Duke did, though certainly there was this difference in our cases, the Iron Duke had already gained *his* fame—*mine*, though quite as certain, was yet in

embryo. A group of cherry-cheeked damsels, with their broad-shouldered, bull-headed, bumpkin admirers, merely cast smirking glances at me as I passed. I thought how very different the case would be in a week or two. The cloud that obscured the sun would then have been withdrawn; fame would have trumpeted throughout the county, at least, the name of "Potts;" there would then be no eyes but for Potts—no smiles but for Potts—and country bumpkins might borrow their sweetheart's garters to make halters with.

My reflections had carried me thus far, when I found myself in front of a dingy beer-shop, which I perceived had some kind of a sign dangling in front, beneath which I deciphered with some trouble, "The Black Jug." This, then, was the place at which I was to inquire the road to the "Royal Horsham Theatre." I had hardly made my wishes known, when a tall, good-looking young fellow, who had evidently been dining off a scanty allowance of bread and cheese and intermediate, came forward, and civilly offered to show me the way, as he was going there himself. I accepted the offer, and we fell into conversation, from which I gatherad that he was attached to the theatre himself in some capacity. He tried hard to get at my business; but as I was rather too deep to be pumped by a candle-snuffer or scene-shifter—one or the other I felt assured he was—I curtly told him that my business was with the proprietor, and strictly private. Turning a corner of the lane abruptly, we came full upon a long, low, thatched, barn-like building, on one of the whited sides of which, to my

disagreeable surprise, I saw, daubed in red letters about two feet in length, "Royell Horsem Theater." A common-looking person, in a velveteen jacket, and holding a pail of red ochre in one hand, was busily employed in an atrocious attempt to caricature the royal arms.

I was half a mind to go back, so intense was my astonishment and disappointment; but, determining to see the matter fairly out, I accosted the artist.

"Here, my man," said I, with some dignity, "I want Mr. Thompson, the proprietor. I have a letter for him."

"Give it to me, young man," said he, "and come this way."

He took the letter, and I followed him into the interior, which, indeed, proved to be a barn undergoing transmogrification into a temporary theatre. If I was amazed at the exterior of the "Royal Horsham Theatre," I was still more bewildered when the velveteen-jacketted personage proceeded deliberately to break open the seal of the letter, and to peruse its contents. A light suddenly broke in upon me. This must be the veritable "Thompson" himself. I was not mistaken; and, indeed, I needed no announcement of the fact from himself, for, casting my eyes about, I spied a big man on a ladder in shirt-sleeves and paper cap, nailing up a bit of red bunting, which was intended to mark the places dignified with the name of boxes, who, turning round at the noise made by our entrance, disclosed to me the well-whiskered, unshorn visage of my friend Waldegrave.

"Hah! dear friend, and partner of our toils," said he, jumping down and seizing my hand with a tragedy air, "welcome to Horsham—thrice welcome to the Royal Theatre! Let me do the honours—let me introduce you to the ladies and gentlemen of our corps. This is our governor (slapping Thompson on the shoulder); this, our walking gentleman and genteel comedy man (pointing to my conductor); that, the lady who does leading tragedy—her Lady Macbeth and Belvidera are the best things off the London boards; and this has come down expressly to take nothing but 'breeches' parts, as she looks well in tights, and is as proud of her legs as Vestris."

I did not respond with equal warmth to the introductions. Mr. Thompson eyed me somewhat superciliously.

"Oh! you are the joining gentleman. Very well; we are getting ready for opening. All my company are expected to make themselves useful. We'll find you a job of whitewashing to-morrow."

I cut the interview short by asking Mr. Thompson to come and eat his steak with me at four o'clock.

"To be sure he will," said Waldegrave, "and as I am only a 'light grubber,' I'll come too. What will feed two will feed three. And I want to have a little serious chat with an old friend like you."

I did not object to this addition to the party; and having named the "Anchor," the best hotel in the town, I saw that the *rendezvous* very much enhanced the respect of both my intended guests.

I got back to the inn with somewhat less elevated expectations. Resolving to see my way clear before I irrevocably committed myself, I began to unpack my portmanteau, in order to get at my purse, as I felt pretty sure that a resort to its contents would be indispensable after the entertainment was over. I was too busy in diving among shirts, dress coats, and handkerchiefs, to notice that the door opened—that Waldegrave walked into the room.

"Glad I dropped in a minute or two before Thompson," said Waldegrave; "egad, a sight like that portmanteau is worth a 'wilderness of monkeys.' Why, there's body linen and silk handkerchiefs enough to set up a haberdasher's shop. Pity we're not both same size, or I'd steal one of your shirts, for I buried the last of mine yesterday, and here's the tombstone," producing a pawnbroker's duplicate. "What," said he, seizing one of my new silk handkerchiefs, "a canary bandana, by all that's glorious. I've left my last wipe to keep my dickey company, so I'll just take the loan of this till to-morrow, when, honour bright, I'll send it back by our property woman."

The little transaction was done in such an off-hand manner, that I had no time to refuse. In the ostentation of my heart, I could not resist the opportunity of displaying my purse.

"What? Bits of Bank of Elegance—eh? No, by all the gods of Olympus, genuine Bank of England beauties! Harkye, brother—the Royal Horshamites are fraternal fellows; out of tin one day, in tin another;

you're stumped to-day, I share my purse with you; I'm stumped to-morrow, you down with the ready to me like a trump. That's our system. I'm 'hard up' just for a day or so. I won't deny it. The governor, a regular screw, won't advance a dump till we open. Lend me one—only one—of those Bank of England bits of stiff, and I'll give you an order on our treasurer for the amount."

It happened to be a soft moment with me, I suppose, for in a twinkling I found myself *minus* a one pound note, and *plus* an order on the treasurer of the Royal Horsham Theatre for one pound sterling. The vociferous thanks of my grateful friend were cut short by the entrance of Thompson, and then dinner was served.

I do not precisely know what definition my friend Waldegrave put upon the description of himself as a "light grubber;" but I can safely swear to three helps of rump steak of, at least, half-a-pound each, with an unknown quantity of vegetables and bread and cheese. Three pots of strong ale disappeared before the table was cleared, and then we set in for serious business. Preference over a bottle of sherry having been given to a bowl of whiskey punch, the materials were ordered to be placed on the table, and Waldegrave volunteered to brew it.

By this time the first coolness had thawed, and we had got somewhat chatty and sociable. Thompson thought it necessary to throw in an apology for the barn. The town hall, he swore, was offered; but as the assizes were expected to come on a month sooner than usual, it had been carried by his company *nem. con.* to

have a building all to themselves, and to fit it up at once with scenery and stage properties. As they intended to open with "Macbeth," and some farce—"Deaf as a Post," I think—the following Monday, they had been obliged to press into the service of "fitting up" the whole strength of the *dramatis personæ*, and that would account for the pickle in which I surprised the company.

The conversation then gradually came round to myself, and my views. I spoke with becoming diffidence of Sim's very high appreciation of my undeveloped, yet undoubted talents; but I stated I had peremptorily made up my mind not to "come out" until I had acquired a thorough insight into "stage business."

"I'll take you in hand, my boy," said Waldegrave. "In a fortnight I'll put you up to stage business and by-play. We'll keep you dark for a time, then we'll bill town and county — 'IMMENSE ATTRACTION! — UNPRECEDENTED NOVELTY!!—YOUNG GENTLEMAN FROM LONDON!!!—FIRST APPEARANCE ON ANY STAGE!!!!—SPEAK AN ADDRESS WRITTEN BY HIMSELF!!!!!' Won't that do, governor, eh?" appealing to Thompson.

"The very ticket," said Thompson, speaking rather thick; "but where's the money to come from? It will cost £2 to bill the place well for a bespeak; and I suppose I shall have to raise money on the properties."

"Shan't raise a penny that way," said Waldegrave. "Here's our Crœsus, from Cockneydom, will lend you the dust. Let the governor have £2, my boy, and I'll be security."

"A very good idea; yes, yes, Waldegrave will be security, and you can take it out of the first money on the opening," said Thompson.

I don't know whether the punch, to which I was unaccustomed, had made me rather too good-natured, but certainly I did lend the £2, and received in exchange a second order on the Royal Horsham Treasury, backed by Waldegrave's valuable signature. I parted with the last amount rather less reluctantly than with the first, for I felt I was to be the party principally benefitted, and that it would seem ungracious not to second the efforts of such warm and willing friends. On the opening night it was arranged that I should appear full fig in the dress boxes, in order to give that portion of the house a certain *éclat*.

On Monday evening, at the hour announced for the performance to begin, I found myself seated on a rough board, shaded by the afore-mentioned bit of red bunting, in front of the stage; the orchestra, which consisted of but a solitary fiddle; there had been two, but one had mutinied that very evening, who finding that prepayment, as promised, was not forthcoming, had taken up his fiddle, and left his fellow-fiddler to play orchestra all by himself. My *vis-à-vis* was a lady whom I recognised as the "breeches-part" damsel. There might be half-a-dozen in the pit, and, perhaps, a dozen smock-frocks in the sixpenny gallery. The prospect was certainly not cheering.

I wondered where the treasurer was to be found, and began to speculate on the doubtful contingency of

the money-takers being able to find cash enough to redeem my first note-of-hand. Of the performance itself I need give no description. It was more than respectable; but the most amusing part was the versatility of the "governor," who was at once the *Doctor*, *Macduff*, the *Ghost*, and principal and only scene-shifter, besides singing a comic song between the acts, and dancing a countryman's hornpipe in character.

As I walked towards my inn that evening, I must admit that my reflections on future theatrical possibilities received very material modification. Nightly crowds at either gallery, pit, or boxes, I saw, were moonshine; comfortable profits, or profits at all, from the *share* principle, I felt, were about as likely as finding the philosopher's stone; the chance of my becoming a "lion" seemed to degenerate into the greater probability of finding myself only that animal which the lion's skin partially covered; and as for the Sussex "heiresses"—I sincerely sympathised with their looming disappointment.

Nothing further was left to me except the proud consciousness that both Sim and Waldegrave had borne disinterested witness to histrionic capabilities which, I still continued to think, only required a "clear stage and no favour" to verify completely the warmest of their experienced predictions. My decision was, however, instantly taken. No "first appearance" should dignify the records of the "Royal Horsham Theatre." I would quietly repossess myself of the £2, lent to Thompson, that was to be devoted to billing the town and county, would enjoy myself in a rural way as long

as my money lasted, and then, hey! for London again.

The next morning I walked towards the Royal Horsham to put my new formed plan into practice. The place was as deserted as a pest-house, and a padlock was on the door. My "Black Jug" acquaintance, wearing a pair of dilapidated boots, here joined me.

"The governor has postponed further performances for a month," said he, with a provoking grin, "and gone to London to beat up for more recruits."

"Gone to London?" said I; "well, where is the treasurer?"

"Hah, hah! the treasurer! You may clap all the treasure in your eye, and see none the worse. There was only six and sixpence in the house on Monday; the carpenter took all the money at the pit, and the landlord all at the gallery."

"Then," said I, spitefully, "I suppose your share won't enable you to mend your boots."

"We got sixpence a-piece, and have been obliged to leave the properties in pawn at the 'Black Jug' for our score."

"Well, but," said I, "you must live somehow: I suppose you make up for bad nights with a bumper now and then?"

"I don't know about that. I've been two seasons with the company, and never shared more than ten shillings yet, frequently not more than half that noble sum, for my whole week's work. You are the sixth joining share-member this season."

"The d—l I am!" said I. "But I haven't joined yet. The fact is, I only came down on the strong recommendation of Sim and Waldegrave, who were both fully of opinion that I should make a 'hit' on the stage; and they are tolerably good judges, I should think."

"Hah! the old story. Sim, Waldegrave, and Thompson work together. Waldegrave kids on the greenhorns, Sims finds them a *share* engagement, and Thompson is always open to receive such additions to his company. Take my advice; go back to London, and if you have any tin, mind that none of them draw you of any. Lend us half-a-crown, otherwise I must 'box Harry' for grub for the next two days."

I winced at my companion's remarks. I began to have a tolerably correct comprehension of the situation of matters, a suspicion of latent greenhornism about me crossed my mind for a moment; but anger got the better of my confusion, and taking leave of my new acquaintance, after putting a crown into his hand, I proceeded forthwith to the inn, packed up my portmanteau, paid my bill, put myself on the first London coach, and was set down at the Belle Sauvage the same afternoon—certainly a poorer, if not a wiser man.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SILENT SHAVE.

A FIRST-RATE shaver is as great a *rara avis* as a first-rate poet;—it is seldom that more than one or two of each *genus* make their appearance in a generation. I have never known but *one*, and yet I have been shaved by half the barbers in London, and by barbers innumerable in the country. A "clean" shave is the poor man's luxury; an "easy" shave, every man's delight. Few barber's combine both excellencies. Shaving is an "art;" and yet it has no fixed rules, normal, no schools, no regular training. To be a perfect professor of the tonsorial art a man must have a genius for the business. Practice and observation may improve, but only natural gifts can make the perfect shaver.

London barbers, for the most part, are mere chin scrapers. Stiff-bearded, thin-skinned, mortals, of nervous temperament, submit their chins to the lathering process with feelings somewhat akin to those with which they visit the dentist. Shaving, in short, as practised now-a-days, is a surgical operation, in which blood is drawn, and the nerves, at the same time, literally lacerated. The London barber thinks he is exhibiting the true art and mystery of shaving when he seizes his brush, dips it into scalding water, giving you the first touch of small torture, and proceeds to grind the lather into your very flesh. Then, ill-set razor in hand, he commences some preliminary flourishes, which, to your alarmed vision,

appear to approximate so heedlessly as that the last, to a moral certainty, will take off a bit of your nose; next he goes on stolidly job-jobbing the razor edge right upon the skin, or making long and reckless sweeps, which crucify your nerves, and inspire in you an intense longing for the conclusion of the flaying infliction.

This is bad enough, only not quite so bad as the country barber who, having nothing more delicate to operate upon than pachydermatous bumpkins, scrapes away ruthlessly, as if tearing the bristles from a bacon hog with an oyster shell, excising both beard and cuticle, and leaving the sensitive *cutis* smarting and bleeding for an hour afterwards.

On the Continent matters are not much mended. Barbers there are somewhat more civilized in their process, but then they work with such detestable cutlery. I was not a little astonished on one occasion when travelling in Germany, and requiring to be shaved, I entered a *salon* before which the emblematical brass basin, with piece cut out to fit into the neck, was hung, as an intimation that beards were *coupéd* there. Having been formally seated in an uncomfortable high arm-chair, with my head thrown back against a hard cushion at an excruciating angle, the German operator—a huge, gaunt, military looking figure, with cocked hat and thigh boots, flourishing an instrument not unlike the formidable scimitar with which we see Blue Beard provided in children's picture books—taking me by the whole nose, solemnly addressed this question to me:—

"Will your gracious ludship please to be thumbed or spooned?"

I was fairly pozed; but, after some parleying, I made shift to comprehend that the primitive mode of shaving was still in force in that benighted German village. The shaver was accustomed to thrust his "thumb" into the shavee's mouth for the purpose of tightening the cheek, or the option was politely given to effect the same result with a "spoon." The customer had, therefore, the privilege of choosing between a dirty thumb—which, to do the German barber justice, he always dipped into scented water before introducing into the customer's mouth—or a spoon that required an aperture like Tim Bobbin's to receive it, and which did duty for an unmentionable number of domestic purposes.

I have never met with but one barber who really performed the promise so prominently set forth in the window of "easy shaving," and by whom it was a positive luxury to be lathered. I have said but *one*. I should correct the assertion, and say, but one family. Father and son had the same qualities in common. Hand, light as a lady's—cool, clean, and small—the brush of real badger's tail, charged with creamy soap, being applied with velvetty softness—the keen razor glided over the skin unfelt, or, if felt, with a sensation of security and pleasure: a mouse asleep might have been shaved without being awakened.

It was one of my peculiarities never to be able to shave myself satisfactorily. I found out this "pearl" above all price, this indisputable "easy shaving" shop;

it was in close proximity to the police-court, and for fifteen years, punctually at three o'clock daily, Sundays excepted, I found myself seated in a comfortable chair, undergoing my twopennyworth of tonsorial enjoyment. The shop was like the owners, original and peerless in its way. It was at the corner of Cross-street, commanding a full view of three streets, with public-houses at each corner. All the incomings and outgoings of these public-houses, and the ingress and egress of these three streets, and they were thronged from dawn to dark, were visible from the shop, and, in addition, there were a couple of posts, round which, like a statute fair, daily congregated a bevy of sottish, lazy, out-of-work journeymen tailors.

The windows of the shop were exactly contrived for observing what was going on in the streets and public-houses opposite. One window looked up and down Carnaby-street, and into King-street; the side window gave a view of everything that passed up Cross-street. The shop itself was worth an inspection. In various glass cases were to be seen small fancy dogs, capitally stuffed; and here and there counterfeit presentments, coloured and uncoloured, of the most noted pugilists, pedestrians, and canine heroes of the day.

But it was father and son who afforded me endless materials for surprise and amusement. It was hardly possible, without a close inspection, to distinguish one from the other, they were so exactly alike in height, make, features, and dress. They wore the same kind of mouse-coloured baggy breeches; each sported a counter-

part of the brown-sleeved undress jacket; each had on a similar short white apron; each wore an odd-shaped, impish, light-brown wig, plastered in the same *outre* manner over the forehead, and perched on the apex of the cranium, so as to exhibit the pole of the neck behind in the same vulture-like fashion; and each possessed the same old, grave, and taciturn look. They went about their work in the same deliberate and noiseless way, never addressing a needless question to any customer, yet seeming to know by tuition who every customer was, and what each customer wanted. The son, however, excited my wonder and curiosity the most. He appeared to know everything and everybody, although I never could find out that he stirred from the shop. If there was a fight to come off, he had private information of the whereabouts, and of the condition of the men; if there was a foot-race for a heavy stake, he could tell whether the "American Stag" or the "Regent-street Pet" had the best chance of winning. Nay, after the event had happened, and the affair became, as may be supposed, the topic of conversation in the shop, a word or two laconically dropped by him would show that he knew more about the affair than all the talkers put together, and incontestably that he must have been bodily present. I picked up many a valuable hint from the remarks that passed in the shop among the customers, and became tolerably well initiated into matters which were till then thorough mysteries to me. For instance, I acquired no small knowledge of the points of fancy dogs. I found

out that the breeding of them was a highly profitable trade; that ladies who had "pets"—especially female pets—were anxious to find suitable canine alliances for them, and that fancy dogs of known breed and blood brought their owners a large price for a temporary morganitic marriage. I discovered that the son was a dog-fancier and dealer of no mean pretensions; that down in the regions below he kept a wonderful collection of fancy breeds; that one of the stuffed dogs in the show case was a certain "Romeo," famous among the craft for entailing on his descendants all his special characteristics; that another was the equally renowned "Duke," who was worth his two guineas weekly, as a companion to the lady-pets of ladies of distinction. I became learned in the points of parlour dogs. I could tell pretty nearly as well as most amateurs whether a specimen was the true breed, or to be catalogued as a duffer; whether the nose, if a Charles's breed spaniel, was of the proper snubness and smuttiness; whether flewed in the proper places and of the proper length; and whether the ears came up—or rather, hung down—to the proper standard of canine perfection. All this information, and much more of a miscellaneous character, I collected while undergoing the operation of shaving. It was of itself well worth the collective twopences I expended in the shop.

I have said that for fifteen years at least I hardly ever missed a day on which I did not indulge in a visit to the easy shaving shop. During all that period I never remember speaking to the pair of shavers—never,

at least, but one fatal *once*. The shaving operation passed in dumb show. The brace of barbers—their name was Dawes—seemed to fall instinctively into my reticent humour; neither of them, that I can recollect, ever addressed a question to me that required a verbal answer. While being shaved, I could, and did, indulge freely in all sorts of reveries. I used to "con over" the "points of humour" for my forthcoming comic case; and if tickled with my own nascent wit—a contingency the judicious reader will have no doubt in anticipating, occurred pretty often—I could break out into a quiet laugh, with the perfect assurance that the shaving process would be promptly suspended until all danger of being "nicked" had passed.

Some of my best productions originated in this shop. I don't know why I need conceal the fact, considering that one of the greatest poets of any age has left on record that several of his most sublime inspirations came upon him, and received a "local habitation and a name," while seated on the domestic throne.

My daily presence was looked forward to as a matter of course. I always found the big chair vacant at the recurring hour; the son generally prepared for action, each party being as mute as mackerel, at least towards edch other. The son, however, was always ready with his pithy remarks, and his ready bits of information; his eye, from habit, was constantly thrown towards one or other of the windows; no man, dog, or horse could pass up the streets—no male or female toper, on the sly,

could enter the public-houses, without being marked by him. This was known so widely, that neighbours constantly dropped in to make inquiries.

"Seen my husband to-day, Mr. Dawes?" an anxious wife, with dinner waiting, popping in her head, would ask.

"Went up the street half-an-hour ago with Mike," would, perhaps, be the answer.

"Father hasn't been home to-day?" inquires a little girl.

"He's in the 'Crown,' opposite; don't go for him, as he's out on the 'loose,' and you may come in for a clout on the head."

"Where's Dick Fogarty?" another would ask.

"Called off 'the post' to a job, and gone to Nichol's for orders."

This was only a common and daily display of his faculty of observation. Sometimes it was turned to a profitable account.

One day, while dreaming pleasantly under the delectable influence of the razor, Avis, a rather-too-fast officer, bustled in:—

"Look alive, Sam," said he, "and give us a scrape, as I'm off to Whitechapel. Lady Churchill has just been to the Beak, and stated that her black-and-tan Blenheim's boned out of the phaeton. It's a safe three sovereigns in my pocket, for I know where to drop upon the prig, and I'll have the dog in her ladyship's house and the three quid in my purse in less than an hour, or I'll eat my staff."

With Sam Dawes, the son, however, Avis was no favourite.

"You'll pocket them three sovereigns—over the left," said Sam; "and you'll have a tough lump of 'lignum' for your dinner."

"Bet you a farden cake, and me have first bite, that I know who prigged the dog," said Avis, nettled. "Jack Easthope wasn't in Regent-street to-day for nothing; what do you say to that, my know-all covey?"

"Well, Jack Easthope's just dropped into the 'Crown,' and you'll be in time to collar him and the lady's dog—pervising there's two of the same breed," said Sam.

Clements, who came in at the moment, and who had firm faith in the little barber's intelligence, as soon as Avis had quitted the shop, remarked—

"The lost dog is Lady Churchill's favourite; she has offered three pounds, and I'll stand half to be put on the pincher."

"Where was the dog missed?"

"From the phaeton, as it was standing at Sowerby's, in Regent-street."

"How long ago?"

"Half-an-hour.

"Well, just half-an-hour ago 'Curly Bill' ran down King-street," said Sam, with a meaning look at the officer; "he came out of Regent-street. He'd got something that kicked under his coat, and there was a bit of blue ribbon hanging down."

"The dog had a blue ribbon round his neck," said Clements.

"Bill hangs out at the 'Mermaid,' at the back of Marshall-street," said Samuel, nodding.

Clements made no further remark, but left the shop, and returned in about five minutes.

"You're out this time, old fellow," said he; "Bill was there, certainly, but he swore hard and fast he hadn't been in Regent-street all the morning."

"Then you hain't got the dog, of course?" said Sam, with a twinkle of the eye.

"No; how could I?"

"Thought not," replied Sam, giving a slight kick at the coat-pocket of the officer. A small bark and a prolonged whine rendered concealment of no avail; the secret was revealed, and in another moment the little dog with its blue neck-ribbon was produced.

I have corrected my mistake in saying that my daily "shave" was invariably a "silent" one. I recollect, to my cost, that I spoke *once*. Having to attend a morning concert at the Hanover-square Rooms, I took my twopennyworth of chin-polish an hour or two earlier than usual. The concert was over at three o'clock, and as I came through Carnaby-street I mechanically turned into the easy shaving-shop, and seated myself in the operation chair. I was lathered as usual, *sub silentio*, but the first stroke of the razor recalled to my recollection a dim notion of the same process an hour or two back.

"You shaved me just now!" said I, abruptly.

The sound of my voice caused the barber to start; his hand, in sympathy with his surprise, forgot its caution, and I received a smart gash for the first and last time.

I never put another question after that.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE "SAVILLE" GAMBLING-HOUSE.

GAMING-HOUSES are one of the specialities of the West-end. The "hells" of the present day, however, are not quite like the "hells" of the past. The alteration in the law—the power given to the police to break into any suspected house on representation made by two neighbours or witnesses to Scotland-yard, to the effect that the house is used for purposes of gaming, or frequented by common gamblers—have done much to change the ancient character of "hells," and to reduce their number; they still, however, exist in sufficient plenty to give full opportunity to those who cannot resist the temptation afforded by hazard, *rouge-et-noir*, or *roulette*, to ruin themselves speedily and infallibly. We say "infallibly," because there is not, there never was, and never will be, a regular London "hell" established on "fair-play" principles. The old keepers of "hells" were, without exception, broken-down gamblers, gambling crimps, and Jew money-lenders—men of desperate characters, and utterly without human compunction or principle. All regular "hells" were supplied with a staff of "bonnets," *i.e.*, confederates in the plot to rob unwary visitors, and

to "ring in" at the proper moment loaded and cogged dice, so contrived as to turn up aces or sixes at will; with cards so prepared as to cut honours, or turn up a particular colour, red or black; with *roulette* tables fraudulently constructed in such a way, as that by depressing a concealed spring, perhaps with the foot on the floor, or by the pressure of the croupier against the table, the ball would be guided into a certain space, so naturally as to deceive the most practised and suspicious eye.

The late jailor of the police-court, Wilks, had quite a collection of these ingenious rascalities, taken from various gambling-houses that had been suddenly entered and searched by the police, before sufficient time had been given to destroy the evidences of fraud.

The "bonnets," who would be found, on the entrance of a monied visitor, sitting round the table, apparently absorbed in play, were always provided with false dice to "ring in" if an opportunity occurred, and were thoroughly trained in what is termed, in gambling parlance, the "landing," "tripping," and "securing" one or both dice, so as to make a "main," high or low, a matter of certainty. With such dead odds against players, the marvel is that any victim could be foolish enough ever to enter one of these houses. But the evidences of swindling and unfair play were generally so well masked in the leading "hells" as to remain undetected until brought to light by the researches of the police. The unsuspecting monied simpleton, because he could detect nothing foul, thought that all was conducted on the "square;" and possibly the play might be

"square" up to a certain point, but when the stake was of sufficient magnitude, or the "plant" had been fully made, then the "cross" was invariably called into operation to the ruin of the victim.

As the police were invested with formidable powers, and usually planned their attacks with great secresy and cleverness, the whole force of the genius of hell-keepers was directed towards the adoption of effective precautions against a surprise. The outward approaches—doors, passages, and also windows—were constructed with great strength. Iron plates, iron shutters, heavy chains, bolts, and trap-doors were freely put into requisition. The roofs were particularly well guarded, to prevent the ingress of the enemy, and to secure egress in case the place was successfully stormed. Furnaces were kept constantly burning, to consume instantly the materials of gambling. Fire-grates were ingeniously constructed, so as to allow a portion of the fire to be lifted off, and cards, dice, and boxes to be thrown into the opening and burnt up, before the police could force an entrance. But the great security of the gaming-house keepers and frequenters was found to lie in having a large body of water ready to turn on in the ordinary closet. It was only necessary to throw into the closet pan all the materials of gambling, and to turn on the water, for the whole of this evidence to be carried with a rush right into the common sewer, defying the possibility of being recovered or identified. Of course, in proportion to the precautions taken by the hell-keepers, were the ingenious devices invented by the police to get evidence, and to baffle

precautions. Plain-clothes men became soon too well known to be serviceable; besides, it was difficult to find a constable at a pinch with sufficient *nous* to act his part so as to elude detection when he gained access to an establishment, and it was well known that if detected his position would be by no means an enviable one. Then again, sudden and forcible entrance was found to be of no use whatever, for though house after house, notorious as hells, was invaded, and all parties present taken into custody, yet, from the complete and ingenious way in which keepers, bonnets, and gamblers contrived to destroy every particle of what the law called "gambling implements," it was found quite impossible to make out a case, consequently defendants were all discharged, and something very like ridicule fell upon the repeatedly abortive attempts of the police to obtain convictions.

There was one gaming-house in particular against which the police had in vain attempted to get evidence enough to warrant them in applying for an authority to break into the place. In fact, this "hell" had completely set the police at defiance, and had so cleverly arranged its system, that no one, unless one of the club, or introduced by a member, could ever hope to gain admittance.

The "hell" was situated close to Barker's panorama, and the house has been, I believe, since converted into a large and respectable coffee-house. This point of the narration gives me an opportunity of introducing the late well-known William Horsford, one of the most active of the Mendicity Society's officers, who possessed

a remarkable talent for tracing out and detecting begging-letter writers, and the superior class of begging impostors, and of placing the continuation of my story about this Leicester-square hell into his hands.

"Well," continued Horsford, "Superintendent Beresford, who never liked to be beat, says to me,

"'Bill, can't you give us a lift here?'

"'Make it worth my while,' says I, 'give me my own time, and I don't care if I lend a hand.'

"'We will settle what you're to have by and by,' said he; 'at all events, if you can't do anything, your expenses are sure.'

"I went to work, but I had a deal of trouble to get hold of any one, they were all such artful cards belonging to that crib. However, I managed to find out that a cove, who went by the name of Captain McCrae, was the secretary to the 'Saville Literary Club,' as the gaming-house was called; that he was very fond of flowers, that he was a regular tulip fancier, and that he always breakfasted at a coffee-house in Windmill-street. I went to one of our governors, who was famous for his hothouse plants, and asked him to let me have a few flowers for a morning or two; and having 'shown him a light,' he told me to come and pick whatever I liked from his conservatory. I got a handsome nosegay, not forgetting a few tulips, and then went home and made myself look as much like a farmer as possible. I stuck on my nob a broad-brimmed low-crowned hat, and togged myself out in blue coat, yellow waistcoat, buck-skin breeches, and top boots, with a stunning big

sporting shawl round my neck. I went into the coffee-room, and there sat my Captain, reading the paper. I pushed myself into the box where he was, with 'Sarvant, Sir. Fine fresh growing morning this; bring out the early peas.'

"The Captain wasn't to be had, so he only gave a kind of grunt, and moved up to the window. I shoved my nosegay just before him, and dropped my stick with a whack on the table for the waiter. The Captain looked up, and was going to say something angrily, when, catching sight of the nosegay, he looked at it for a minute.

"'Fine flowers those, Sir; very fine indeed. Never saw finer tulips in my life.'

"'Pratty well,' said I. 'They all comed out of my own garden; and my missus makes me bring up a handfull every morning to town for my daughter, who's married, and was always fond of these sort of things.'

"'Couldn't shew finer tulips in Covent-garden, or at Chatsworth, I'm sure,' said the Captain. 'It's a treat only to look at them.'

"I let him admire them as much as he liked, and, having had my breakfast, and done as much as I wanted that morning, I bid him good bye. The next morning I brought a bigger nosegay, with more tulips, and the Captain was on to it directly.

"'You seem to take a fancy to my nosegay,' said I, 'and, as it's big enough for two, take half, and welcome.'

"The Captain at first refused, but I made him take half, and we soon got the best of friends. I told him

as how I came to town to see 'Lunnun sights,' and, if he'd like to take a run down to my place, I'd give him a real 'nigger-head' tulip root and a shake-down. I went on in this way for about a week, by which time the Captain and me got as thick as thieves. I thought it about time to bring matters to a close, as I had shelled out a lot of tin, so I told him the next morning that I was going back to my farm, for I'd seen everything in London I wanted to see except one thing which I meant to see that night—that I meant to have just one rattle at the dice; that I'd got a friend to admit me to Davis's, and, if he'd go with me, I'd stand the racket, but I wouldn't drop more than a fi'pund note.

"The Captain advised me not to go near Davis, for I should be sure to be robbed, he said; but, as he did a little now and then in 'shaking the elbow' himself, he would take me to a friend's house, where I might play or look on, just as I pleased. I made an engagement to meet him in the evening, and about eleven o'clock I went with him to 'the Saville,' where, after giving the pass to the porter—the porter who let us in—I was told I might come whenever I liked, by merely saying to the porter that I was the Captain's friend. We went up stairs, and found only about half-a-dozen in a room which had a hazard table and a roulette board all ready. I stopped an hour, till about twenty more came in, and play then began. I took a 'likeness' of everyone there, especially the bankers, the croupiers, and the bonnets, that I might know 'em again when I wanted 'em. When I left I started off to the station, and gave the super-

intendent a history of what I had done. It was arranged to make the attack the next night—a body of constables was to meet quietly at a public-house in Sidney's-alley, and, when the clock struck twelve, come out, and break in without further notice. I went to 'the Saville' about half-past eleven o'clock, and was admitted immediately. When the clock struck I heard a sudden bustle below. A bell was set ringing furiously, and instantly all the players stopped in dismay. The porter rushed up, and holloa'd out that the police had forced the first door, and would be in the room in less than a minute. Cards, dice, cloth, and the roulette table, were piled up in a jiffey, and put into a basket. The gas-lamp was instantly drawn down, and, by a turn of the screw, with it came also the rose, shewing a place in the ceiling large enough to hold the basket, which was placed in it hastily, and the gas-lamp pushed up to its usual position.

"'Look after the bank,' says the Captain, 'the police will be sure to search us. I'll take charge of the gold, and my country friend here will take care of the notes. Here's £150—one fifty, and ten tens. It won't look so dark if the notes are found in your possession.'

"I collared the swag, and promised faithfully to take the greatest care of it. The gamblers then put wine and glasses on the table, pulled out cigars, and, drawing chairs, sat round the table, as if they were only a friendly smoking and drinking party. The police, with Beresford at their head, soon made their appearance. The Captain pretended to be indignant at the visit, and insisted on knowing what the police had come for. The superintendent

told him he had a warrant to search the house, as a common gambling-house.

"'Search, and be ——. No, I won't swear,' says the Captain, who affected to be in a towering rage, 'I'll go to work in another way. I'll bring an action for trespass. This is a private club for smoking and literary conversation. These gentlemen are authors, every one of them literary men, who come here to study.'

"'All right, Captain,' said the superintendent. 'I don't see your library, however; but I've a friend here who, I dare say, can shew me where you keep your *books* (the flash word for a pack of cards). Come Bill,' said he, giving me a nod, 'let those literary gentlemen see that, instead of smoking cigars, they should have *smoked* you.'

"The Captain looked at me with a face as long as his arm.

"'The d——l! What the countryman a *nose!* A pretty flat I've been.'

"'Never mind, Captain,' said I; 'you're welcome to the missus's flowers, and my nigger-head tulip—when you get it; but I'm sorry you can't have a day's shooting this season at my farm, as I'm afeard you wont be out of quod.'

"'Hand over my money,' says he.

"'Oh, yes, when we get before the beak to-morrow. The money, till then, will be safe enough with me.'

"Six-and-twenty were taken to the station-house; and the next morning three were fined the full penalty of £100 a-piece; the others were let off with a five-pounder."

"And how about the bank-notes?"

"Gave them up in court, honourable, as I said I would. One fifty and eight tens."

"Why that's only £130!" said Clements. "The Captain, you know, said he gave you £150."

"So he might have said, and swore it, if he liked; but I'll take my oath, I counted the notes over twice when I got home, and couldn't make more than £130 of them nohow."

"Hem!" said Clements. "Then the job turned out tolerable, after all."

"Pretty well," said Horsford. "I didn't grumble. But the best of it was that the Captain, who wanted to gammon me that I had £150 of him, never heard the last of the tulip caper. All his 'pals' used to chaff him, and holloa out, 'How are you, my tulip?' till he was ready to bite his own head off."

CHAPTER XX.

"THIRSTY JOE."

One of the most remarkable characters of the day in what, I suppose, I must call the lower walks of life, was "Thirsty Joe." Many yet living will recollect the rubicund visage and stalwart frame of the old waterman who officiated for so many years at the stand opposite Apsley House. The real name of this personage was George Brewer; but, from his invariable complaint to all comers throughout the day that he was "werry dry," and his persevering petitions to moisten his throttle with beer in all its varieties; or spirits, neat, hot, or cold "without;" nothing liquid coming amiss, except pump water—he acquired the *sobriquet* of "Thirsty Joe," which he retained to the last day of his public life.

Although between seventy and eighty years of age at the time I speak of (thirty years ago), he bore no evidence about him of his advanced years. He was still of powerful make, as recusant cabmen who forgot to drop their coppers for watering horse or "dishclouting" cab, knew to their cost; and he went about the work of his stand with the alacrity of youth, looking as fresh as a "four-year-old." His immense ruby-red features, about the size and colour of a warming-pan, his fell of snow-white woolly hair and whiskers, rendered him a remarkable object at all times.

But he was best known to the general public from

his perpetual collisions with cabmen, either on account of some attempt to "bilk" him of his "regulars," or because he would not be a party to a "plant" on some "swell" who had been dining out with such perseverance as to seriously jeopardize his perpendicular progress. No "night" cabman, or "buck," was ever permitted to pick up this kind of prize as a fare from his stand. "Thirsty Joe" would invariably take charge of the "swell" himself, put him into the vehicle of a trustworthy driver, book the number of the cab or coach, as the case might be, and call the next day to see if the trust had been faithfully discharged.

The result of this line of conduct was two-fold. First, it obtained for the "Piccadilly" rank a first-class character, and for Thirsty Joe no end of "largesses" from "nobs," who had fortunately retained sense enough to avoid the "Haymarket"—then justly called the "thieves' rank"—and to make their way to where person and property had a chance of reaching home in safety. And next, it brought upon him numerous personal conflicts, to engage in which he was ever found "nothing loth." In fact, in his youth he had been in the ring; not the London, but the provincial ring, and among country roughs his immense bone, muscle, and weight, caused him to be reckoned a very ugly customer.

His pugilistic qualities were kept in exercise for years afterwards, when coachman to Sir John Wilson, brewer and sportsman, one of the famous Colonel Berkeley's associates, and, like the gallant Colonel, a warm patron of all kinds of manly sports, "pugilism"

—then in the heyday of its popularity—among the rest. It was the custom of Sir John, whenever a candidate for fistic honour from the Bristol school showed more than average fistic talent, to send him up to London for the purpose of placing him under his coachman's care, whose task it was to train him *secundem artem* until sufficiently accomplished in the self-defence science of the London school, to make it safe to match him against a suitable metropolitan hero of the ring.

But there was another peculiarity which kept the "science" of Thirsty Joe in full activity. He had a mortal aversion to a soldier.

"Can't abide a swaddy," said Joe; "never could. Wenhever I seed one a coming along, I'd shoulder him off the pavement. Swaddy 'ud off with his belt, and I'd jest lift up my sledge-hammer fist, and down 'ud go swaddy. Sir Richard Birnie, the beak, knowed me werry well.

"'Wot, here again, Brewer?'" he'd say; 'it's the third time this week I've had you afore me for the same hoffence.'

"'Can't abide a swaddy, your worship, and that's all about it,' says I.

"'Then,' says he, 'this time it's twenty "bob," and next time the full penalty, mind you.'"

In his later years, Thirsty Joe's exploits were more particularly directed against cabmen — a rough lot, who found a rougher hand in Joe to deal with them. His method was peculiar. If his quarrel was with a brace of these worthies, he would seize one in each hand,

and knock their heads together until they cried "*Peccavi.*" If a single antagonist, he would lay hold of him with a polar-bear grasp, thrust him against the pump, then, turning his back, give him once or twice the full weight and power of his *butt*-end—a visitation about as formidable as a blow from the buffer of a steam engine.

His frequent visits to the police-court had taught him something of law, which made him careful to keep on what he conceived to be the windy side of it, by never using fist or foot.

"Can't prove as I assaulted him, your worship; never lifted my hand to him, only just banged him agin the pump with my *anti-front* side."

Even the gravity of the dignified Mr. Dyer was not proof against this line of defence.

"I think," said that magistrate, with an imperceptible smile, on one occasion when this plea was urged, "that you have literally committed an *ass*ault; therefore, I fine you a shilling."

But Thirsty Joe's great pride was to relate to any kind listener who would volunteer a "pot of heavy" or a drop of "summut short," that passage in his personal history when he himself was a master hackney coachman.

I may here mention that Joe's constant and faithful companion, wherever he went—and especially in his frequent visits to the police-court—was his wife, a little, sharp, talkative woman, of whom, notwithstanding his enormous bulk and prowess, he stood unmistakeably in awe.

"There ain't sitch another hooman in the world as my missus"—Joe was evidently proud of her—"I vouldn't change her for the best lady in the kingdom; and I'll be bound she vouldn't change me for the best lord. I vos hindependent once. I could yarn no end of money, and if I had'nt laid it out in houses"—public-houses he meant—"but had guv it to my old hooman to keep, I shouldn't be only a waterman now. Howsever, in my time I've been a master, and had two hackney-coaches of my own, with three pair of osses. That was arter I left Sir John, to set up for myself, worse luck."

"What brought you down in the world?" I asked.

"Wot? why, jest stand another pot, cos I'm 'werry dry,' and I'll tell you all about it."

The "pot" was ordered, and Thirsty Joe having taken toll and handed the beverage to his wife, who honourably went shares in his bibulous perquisites, he proceeded to detail his list of mishaps, after setting up for himself. Horses went lame, corn went up to a famishing price, and a perpetual drought in his throat took him into favourite public-houses when he ought to have been looking out for a job.

"But my missus kept things straight a long time. If I didn't come home at the regular hour, she was arter me. She "chivy'd" all round the coach-stands; and, when she found me, if I was lumpy and couldn't drive home, why she shoved me into the coach, and druv home herself. Warn't it so, old hooman?"

The "old hooman" nodded acquiescence.

"There she is," said Thirsty Joe, with evident pride, "as good a judge of horse-flesh as any coper in London. She bought all the hosses and corn; and, what's more, when I got 'moppy'—and every man is overtaken now and then—she'd rub down the hosses, wash their legs, and put 'em up for the night better 'an any stableman as ever I come across."

"I didn't buy Old Boney, though," said the lady.

"That's about right," said Joe. "I bought him, one night, of a man that was taking him to the knacker's?"

"And I called him 'Old Boney' the moment I set eyes on him, because he was such a 'notomy," said the wife. "When my old man brought him to the stables, I could have knocked his head off. 'What's this?' says I.

"'It's a new hoss, missis,' says he; I got him cheap, so if we find he ain't got no "go" in him, I'll take him to Cow-cross to-morrow, and make all my money of his hide and hoofs.'

"Well, I looked at the poor brute, and thought to myself, it's a long time since you blow'd out your old hide with a feed of corn. I put him into a stall, gave him a ball myself, and a warm mash, and clapped a lot of horse-cloths on him, and left him comfortable for the night; though I never expected to see him alive the next morning. My old man takes out the coach next day, and in the afternoon comes home with another horse, lame.

"'Here, my gal,' says he, 'more luck; the best

horse going on three legs, and t'other too weak to pull the drag hisself.'"

"I recollect all about it," interposed Joe. "Wen I got home, I was precious mad, and 'werry dry,' and arter a pint or two of bang-up ale, I went to the stable, and there I saw my last night's purchase a picking his bit of hay out of the rack. I says to my old hooman—

"'Why,' says I, 'wot have you been and gone and done to Old Boney? He looks a ten-pun' note better than he did when I bought him. I'm blessed if I don't put him to, and see if he can't arn his wittles.'

"Well, I put him to at ten o'clock, and brought him home at three in the morning, in which time he had helped to yarn fifteen shillings, and from that day up to five years, just as long as I was a master, I never had a hoss to beat him at work, heavy or light."

"Ah, poor Old Boney was a comical creature," said Mrs. Brewer; "he was a Christian in everything but being able to speak. He wouldn't take his corn from no hand but mine; he would hang his nose over the crib, and follow me all about the stable and yard with his eyes wherever I went. He always expected me to rub his poor old nose a bit, otherwise he kept on whinnying and making a noise just as if he was fretting. But the funniest thing was with his feed; he would not touch his oats unless I brought the sieve to him. If my master, or one of our men, attempted to feed him, he would put his head under the manger, and there he'd stand until I was fetched to move about his corn. I got quite fond of Old Boney at last, but all I could do

wouldn't save him. He came home real bad one day, and I gave him some warm gruel, with half a pint of ale in it: but he didn't get better, and I sat up all night minding him. It was of no use, however; poor Old Boney never got over the attack, and in the middle of the night (wiping her eyes) he died of the dry gripes."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE "GAME CHICKEN."

HAVING, I trust properly, introduced "Thirsty Joe" to the notice of my readers, I will repeat one of his amusing communications when, being "werry dry," as usual, he had induced me to stand a pot of his favourite tipple at the Marlborough Head. I wish I could give the story exactly in his own racy Doric, it would be then as entertaining to my readers now as it was to myself then.

The celebrated pugilist, Harry Pearce, known as the "Game Chicken," "came out" under Thirsty Joe's auspices in this way: Pearce, then a very young man, with a rising Bristol reputation, but not formally a member of the "ring," was brought under the notice of Colonel Berkeley in the following manner:—

While passing through the Berkeley Castle grounds with a basket on his arm, he was stopped by a couple of the Colonel's keepers, who insisted on seeing the contents of the basket. The keepers were powerful fellows, and noted bruisers in their way. One of them

laid hold of the basket, and was instantly "floored." His companion came to the rescue, and was "grassed" in the same unceremonious way. A regular fight ensued —two to one; Pearce thrashed them both soundly, and walked off in triumph. The *fracas* came to Colonel Berkeley's ears. Pearce was sent for, and having modestly expressed a wish for an introduction to the London ring, Colonel Berkeley called Sir John Wilson, then on a visit, and Sir John gave Pearce a letter to his coachman, "Thirsty Joe," directing him to take Pearce in hand, and see what could be made of him.

"I got my letter," said Thirsty Joe, "and having put up the carriage, I went to the Hampshire Hog, in Soho, to see arter my man. I looked into the tap-room, and there sot a youngish country chap in a smock, with a hat which looked as if the dogs had knawed the brim on it all round.

"'Be your name Pearce?' says I.

"'Ees, zur,' says he.

"'Be you the chap as is comed here to lick all London?'

"'Zo they may zay, master,' said Pearce, in regular 'Zummersetshire;' 'but I'd rather loike to pitch into a couple of pounds of beef skirt just now, vor I hain't done much in the grubbing line to-day.'

"Well, I guv him a tidy 'blow out,' and took him home, and told my missus to let him have a shake-down in the hay-loft.

"The next morning he offered to help me in the stables, and I set him to wash the carriage. But he

was as hockard as a swaddy, and warn't a bit of use—was he, old hooman (to his wife)?"

"That's 'cause you fancies as nobody could wash a carriage but yourself," replied the 'old hooman;' "this I'll say, there wasn't a handier lad anywhere than Harry. He'd do anything you asked him, and was always good-humoured and laughing like."

"Well, he was a ready, pleasant chap enough," said Joe, "but he couldn't wash a carriage. He was only fit to muck out the stables and pump water for my old hooman. He'd been with us about a week, when I thought as I'd just give him a taste of the gloves, so I axed my missus for the leathers; but she was so taken up with Harry, that she wouldn't give 'em to us."

"I didn't like to see him hurt," said the wife, "so I says to Harry, 'Don't you have nothing to do with the gloves, for my old man only wants to knock you about; but I won't let him.' 'Never mind about me, mother,' Harry says—he always called me mother—'if George likes a turn with the gloves, don't 'ee stop him. I can take care of myself, and we shan't do one another no mischief.'"

"That's about it," says Joe. "My missus gives us the gloves, and we went up into the corn-loft, and I can promise you as I meant to let Harry into a 'secret' afore we come down again."

"Yes, and I got into the hay-loft above, where I could see everything," said the old hooman.

"Did you?" said Joe, looking unpleasantly enlightened; "then it's no use telling no lies about wot

took place. We went to work, and I gave him one or two clumsy thumps, for I didn't think much more on him jist then than I should of a swaddy."

"'Hullo, George!' says he, 'how's it to be—is us to play heavy or light?'

"'Do all you know,' says I, ''cos I am going to do all I can.'

"I'd hardly said the words afore I got a couple of facers that set my eyes a dancing. This riled me, and I went at him like a windmill. But, lawks! I might as well have tried to hit a bird or floor an elephant. He had me every way. He druv me about the loft as if he was walloping a sack of flour, and finished by knocking me bang into the corn-bin."

"He! he! he!" said the wife, "I see'd it all. I thought I should ha' bu'sted with laughing when I looked at your two great legs sticking up."

"Well, well, never mind about my great legs," said Joe, looking sour.

"Harry put out his hand in a laughing way to pull me out of the bin.

"'No harm done, George,' says he, 'get up, and let's have t'other round.'

"'Not if I knows it,' says I; 'let somebody else have the next round; and if you do as much to him as you've done to me, he won't want t'other round in a hurry.'

"I must tell you at this time the two most noted men in the ring was Jim Belcher and Jack Birmingham. But Jim was out-and-out, the best man as ever went

into the ring. He held the belt, for he'd licked everybody, and, of course, was the champion.

Jack Birmingham was in the Life Guards: a flash chap as thought he could fight a bit, and so he got hisself matched agin Jim. But though a good 'un among yokels, he warn't no more fit to stand up to Jim than you or I is. Jim was a great pal of mine. He was a first-rate racquet player, and I remember his coming across my stable-yard as well as if it wor to-day, with his handkercher up to his face; he'd got one of his eyes smashed with a racquet-ball, and though he recovered and fowt agin, and beat all his men up to the time when he was licked by Harry, he wasn't the man agin he used to be in his best days. However, after the corn-loft business, I thought it would be as well to let Jack Birmingham try his luck, as he'd got scent of the Bristol countryman. So one day, when Jack calls, he asked me about Harry.

"'Oh,' says I, 'he's a nobody; he knows as much about fighting as a hass; you've only got to kick his behind, and send him back to Bristol.'

"'Ony get him to put on the gloves with me, and I'll stand a pot,' says Jim.

"'Well,' says I, 'I'll try what I can do. Here, Harry,' says I—he was having his dinner—'here's Muster Jack Birmingham wants jest a little turn at the gloves with you for five minutes.'

"I heard Harry say to my old hooman, 'Cut us another bit of pudden, mother,' when out he comes into the yard with his pudden in his hand, eating on it, and in his laughing way says,

"'You zee, Georgy, as I'm ready for another wisit to the corn-loft.'

"I whispers first to Jack, 'Mind you sarve out the countryman,' and then to Harry, 'Jack says he'll lick your head off; let him have it hot and strong.'

"The pair went into the loft, and I crept up to where my missus had looked on at us afore, and I seed 'em go to work. Jack, who was proud of his science, began dodging and feinting for an opening. Harry stood as quiet as a lamb for a minute, then shot out, and caught Jack on the nose a spanker that drew his cork. This got Jack's shirt out, and he went in to mill in right down savage arnest. Harry went in too, and poor Jack, like me, got leathered all over the loft, and at last knocked furder into the corn-bin than ever I did. I didn't stop to see no more, for I know'd Jack had got his gruel, and that, as his monkey was up, he'd want to have a row and a round with me, so I came down into the yard, and got into the carriage, and shut myself in. Presently out of the loft he come, cussing and swearing.

"'Where's that beggar, George Brewer?—where is he?—I'll larn him a trick worth two of his'n.'"

"I see him come down the ladder," said the wife. "What's the matter, Mr. Birmingham?" says I.

"'The matter!' says he, 'look what a pretty mess I'm in'—and sure he was in a pickle; his own mother wouldn't a know'd him. 'Here's George been and gammoned me the countryman's a know-nothing, when he knows more 'an both on us put together.'

"'Don't be in passion, Mr. Birmingham?' says I.

'I'll get you some water, and a wash will put you to rights.'

"Well," resumed Joe, "after Jack had cooled down a bit, I comes out of the carriage, and soaps him over with the promise of standing my pot to his'n, and telling him as I got wuss sarved out by Harry than he did, and that I thought with his science he'd be able to tackle the countryman, and take the conceit out of him.

"A day or two arter this my guvner come to town, and sent to say that Colonel Berkeley wanted to match Harry agin a big Irishman, which one of the Barrymores had picked up in St. Giles's. The match was fixed to come off in the Tennis-court in the evening. I told Harry of it, and got him to promise as he'd not show what he could do all at once, as I wanted to lay out a little money on him, and I'd let him 'stand in' with me.

"In the evening we went to the Tennis-court, and there was the Colonel, and the Colonel's friend with his Irishman.

"'Can you depend on your man?' says the Colonel to me.

"'You'll be safe to bet that he licks the Irishman in fifteen minutes,' says I.

"The men stripped and came to the scratch. The first round or two the Irishman seemed to have it all his own way.

"'Two to one on Paddy,' says his backer.

"'I'll take you, my lord, in tens,' says I; 'and if

you'll say three to one, my man shall win in ten minutes, or I'll take him away.'

"'Done, Brewer,' says he.

"And then I says quietly to Harry, 'You've on'y got ten minutes to do all your work; go in and win.'

"Harry did go in, and in five minutes regularly slogged the Irishman, winding up with a straight shoulder hit on the throat, which sent Paddy head over heels, deaf to time for near ten minutes.

"'You rascal,' says his lordship, shaking his fist at me; 'there's your money, and I've a good mind to give you a hiding for gammoning me into the last bet.'

"'Hope not, your lordship,' says I; 'but if you want to win your money back, next time don't lay agin Harry; he's an out-and-outer.'

"And so he proved, for Harry won all his fights, and I made a little fortin, if I could only have kept it, by betting long odds on him."

CHAPTER XXII.

A "DANDY OF THE OLD SCHOOL."

I HAD occasion to visit the printer of one of the leading journals on a matter of business. The gentleman in question was then in the King's Bench for libel, an action having gone against the paper. I found him in comfortable quarters in the state rooms, and having settled the little affair which occasioned my visit, I spent the remainder of the morning in looking about the place, which then offered a good deal that was novel and interesting to an observant eye. At that period imprisonment on *mesne proces* was not abolished; the Bench was consequently in a very different condition to which it is at present, the population being numerous, and many remarkable characters confined within its walls.

One of the tenants of the state rooms was Captain Bailey, a military dandy, who was there for debt. This gentleman, who was of patrician family, having run through a handsome fortune, had at last adopted the plebeian step of whitewashing himself through the agency of the Insolvent Debtors' Court.

Many persons will yet recollect the amusement which his examination in Portugal-street created, particularly that portion which regarded his personal expenditure. The Captain, who led the fashion in his day, was noted for the peculiarities of his toilet, and, among other extravagances scheduled, which created surprise and merri-

ment, was an item in a west-end tradesman's bill, which consisted of a dozen of French cambric night-shirts trimmed with lace, the charge for which was fifty guineas.

While sauntering round the place I met an acquaintance who pointed out several of the celebrities, amongst them, of course, was the Captain, and a member of the fistic ring, one Robert Hall, known as "Bob the fighting butcher." The Captain, who had then been only inducted into the state rooms a few days before, had already drawn upon himself a good deal of observation from the dandyism of his dress, his "hyacinthine curls," and *haut ton* style of living, and amongst the inmates went by the familiar name of "Miss Bailey." The fighting butcher was a notoriety in his way, owing to the ascendancy he had gained over the unaristocratic portion of the residents of "Tenterden Park," as the Bench was then termed, by the prowess he exhibited with his fist.

It was the settled custom, whenever a quarrel occurred between any of the inmates of the prison, to meet on the racquet-ground after the hour at which the public were excluded, and to fight it out. The racquet-ground was also the favourite and fashionable morning resort, and here most of the crack London players might occasionally be seen taking part in the matches got up by the higher classes of the prisoners.

I found the racquet-ground occupied by several sets of players, in one portion of which was the Captain, and in the adjacent ground the fighting butcher. The Captain's whole appearance was certainly very remarkable. He

had evidently just come from under the hands of his valet, and was the very *beau ideal* of an "exquisite" of the first water. He was attired in nankeen tights, silk stockings and pumps; he wore an embroidered cricket-jacket ornamented with silver buttons, while a turned-down collar, *a la Byron*, displayed his dark and muscular neck, round which was a pink scarf confined by a splendid cameo. His fingers were decorated with massive rings, and a superb watch-chain and seals were pendant from his neck. But the most noticeable portion of his toilet was his hair, which was in great profusion, raven black, carefully oiled, parted in the Milton style on the fore-top, and curled in ringlets down each side of his face. A small imperial set off the dazzling whiteness of his teeth, which were very fine, and kept in beautiful order. It was this apparent effeminacy of exterior, accompanied by the fashionable drawl and lisp, which had earned for the Captain the sobriquet of "Miss," though there was nothing otherwise in his appearance to warrant any inference that might be unwarily drawn from the uncomplimentary nickname.

The Captain was a tall, large-boned man, in the prime of life, and with that unmistakeable and inimitable air of high fashion which is peculiar to the high-bred English gentleman. I say peculiar to *English* gentlemen advisedly, for an English gentleman is *sui generis*. No amount of rank, polish, or dress in the higher orders of any other nation confers that ease, breeding, and dignity which combine to form our national speciality—the true English gentleman.

The Captain was engaged in a game of racquets with Samuel Evans—better known as "Young Dutch Sam the Phenomenon"—who had just given proof of his wonderful powers as a boxer, and was then esteemed one of the best racquet-players in England. The Captain was capering about with imperturbable *sang froid* in his expensive yet unsuitable costume, totally regardless of the jeers which the spectators now and then gave audible vent to. Having made an abortive hit, he stooped down to pick up the ball, and, in doing so, presented an inviting target to the "fighting butcher," who was one of a racquet party of the next base. The butcher, always the first to perpetrate a practical joke, threw a sly wink at his companions, stepped forward, and brought down his bamboo bat with stinging force on the Captain's unprotected rear. The intense pain of the sudden visitation straightened the Captain in an instant, caused him to utter a shrieking oath, to jump at least a yard high, and then to apply his hand to the "part aggrieved," rubbing away vigorously until the pain was allayed. Roars of laughter followed this exploit, and the butcher, with mock humility, began a series of "beg pardon, your ladyship," asserting that the blow intended for his ball had been accidentally intercepted by the most prominent part of the Captain's person. The dark visage of the Captain absolutely looked like glowing copper, but he made no remark; and, turning to Young Dutch Sam, desired him to continue the match. The game was soon over, and the Captain, having settled the charge for the ground,

walked quietly up to the butcher, and, touching him on the shoulder with his racquet bat, said—

"My man, I must be in your debt until the time for ringing out. At half-past four o'clock I shall expect you in the parade, where I mean to give you such a thrashing as will learn you to be civil to me for the future."

The butcher stared contemptuously.

"Oh, certainly, Miss, that is, Captain—get my hair curled, and shall be very happy to take a little walk with you, Miss—I mean Captain—but couldn't think of having a "set-to" with such a handsome-looking gentleman."

"If you are five minutes behind time," said the Captain, sternly, "I'll drag you out of your chummage and horsewhip you round the parade."

Then, turning to Young Dutch Sam, he said,

"Sam, my lad, get half-a-dozen fellows together who know how to keep the ring; pay them well, and then, at half-past four o'clock, I shall want you to look after me."

"All right, Captain," said Young Dutch Sam, respectfully; "you may depend on me."

The Captain turned away and walked to his chambers.

The challenge spread like wildfire over the place, and the racquet-ground was speedily filled with curious spectators. The butcher, who certainly did not want for pluck, evidently was discomfitted at the turn the affair had taken. With the instinctive deference which persons in his station of life experience towards people in the superior ranks of society, he exhibited something

like shame at having acted in the insulting way he had done to the Captain, and for the necessity that now existed to come into personal contact with one so much higher in station to himself.

"Hang it," said he to Young Dutch Sam, to whom he was well known, "if I'd a thought the Captain would have took the matter up this way I'd have asked his pardon there and then; for that's what he wants, I suppose. It was only a stupid joke, and I should like the Captain to know it was only meant as such."

"The Captain," said Sam, drily, "means to make earnest of your joke, I can promise you; so I'd advise you to look out for a friend to pick you up."

"Well," said the butcher, "if it comes to a fight I'll allow the Captain to give me a slap or two, and let him off easy."

"The Captain won't let *you* off easy," said Sam, significantly; "he's learnt all Harry Holt (then a celebrated professor of the art of self-defence) can teach him; and Harry himself, I can tell you, would have thought twice about it before he gave the Captain such a lick as you did."

At four the bell rang for the visitors to leave, and at half-past four the clearance was accomplished. I was one, however, who remained behind. The Bench was quite alive by this time. Even the keepers—who had heard that the "swell was going to have a 'turn up' with the butcher"—agreed to wink at this breach of the rules, and to keep a bright look-out for the governor, should the uproar attract his notice.

Young Dutch Sam had performed his part of the business quite in the professional style. Six or seven big fellows were armed with sticks, and they at once set about beating out the ring. The butcher was there with a coarse, poorside bencher—the bully of the place until the butcher came in, and then he did not dare to display his usual bluster and ruffianism—who had agreed to second him. It was still evident enough that the butcher would have been glad of any decent pretext to back out of a business which his impertinent folly had brought on himself, and which he considered at best bore something of a ludicrous aspect about it.

Precisely as the prison clock went the half hour, the Captain was seen crossing the place in the direction of the racquet-ground. But how changed! All his dandyism had disappeared. The foppish dress was discarded, the jewellery laid aside, and the ringlets hidden beneath a close-fitting helmet cap. The pumps and silk stockings and flesh tights had given place to a pair of strong spiked high-lows and knee corduroys. As he strode firmly forward, with a rough, loose coat about him, he looked as if he would prove a very "ugly customer" to any kind of "heavy weight."

Having made his way to the ring, he threw off his upper coat, and appeared in regular amateur boxing trim, with nothing on the upper part of his person but a short-sleeved under vest, belted round the waist with a scarf. This costume displayed his wiry make, long sinewy arms, and muscular throat to advantage; in short, he might have passed for a regular "professional,"

had it not been for the air of high breeding, which no kind of disguise or costume could have wholly obliterated.

The Captain, who appeared perfectly cool—except about the eyes, which were full of the tiger—said to his second,

"Come, let us get to work at once, Sam; half minute time, you know."

The combatants were brought to the scratch; the butcher seemed rather perplexed what to do, but the Captain gave him no time for reflection, for, measuring his distance rapidly and scientifically, he let fly straight from the shoulder, caught the butcher a heavy spank on the nose, and drew blood instantly. The butcher, stung by the unexpected severity of the blow, lashed out in return rather wildly, but was stopped with scientific precision, and after receiving several more hits, delivered with stinging severity, was fairly knocked down by a flush hit. The Captain walked to the corner of the ring, and deliberately seated himself on his second's knee.

"Pretty well for first round, Sam," said he; "two events—first blood and first knock-down blow—in my favour."

Sam—who, though young in his fighting career, was about one of the best seconds that ever stepped into the ring—looked over to the corner where the Captain's opponent was receiving the usual attentions from his bully second.

"You've woke up the butcher, Captain, and no

mistake; and he means to go in to fight next round. Don't want to win too fast—go at him steady, and wait."

The Captain nodded, and "time" being called he placed himself in attitude. The butcher had partly got rid of his diffidence, and evidently meant mischief. He bustled in artistically to fight; the Captain stopped several heavy blows aimed at him, and returned with punishing effect; but the butcher would not be denied, and got home with one or two facers, which drew blood from the mouth, and brought out the Captain's ire. His second in vain called out, "Steady, Captain, steady." The Captain lost his coolness; and, in his eagerness to punish, missed his distance with several blows, which occasioned him twice to stumble, and to be, as it were, at the butcher's mercy; but the butcher—though he might, according to the recognised rules of boxing, have taken severe advantage of the Captain's temporary helplessness—with true British generosity threw up his hands, and allowed the Captain to resume his guard. The Captain, however, was in no mood to thank even a forbearing opponent for such compliments; he went to work in right down earnest, and a terrific rally ensued. The Captain took his punishment without flinching, returned blow for blow, and after a protracted round that would have done no discredit to the best boxer in the ring, finished by a straight hit from the shoulder, which knocked the butcher completely off his legs.

The Captain walked up to his second, cleared his mouth from the blood, and then proceeded to sponge away the consequences of the last round. Having done

this, he coolly put the seconds aside, and going right up to the butcher, said,

"You are a brave fellow. I've given you the lesson I intended; you've given me one I did not expect, and now we'll shake hands."

The butcher grasped the Captain's hand, and said,

"Captain, I humbly ask your pardon; I've been a fool throughout, and only got what I deserved; I've had many a good man stand before me, but never a better than you, so I hope you'll think no more about the business of this morning."

"I don't think the worse of you for your apology," said the Captain, "and now, mind, after this we are friends."

The bully, who began to feel a little spice of contempt for the butcher's tameness, here said, tauntingly,

"So you are going to let yourself be licked by a great girl, butcher. Well, don't come any of your bounce after this."

"I'll take the bounce out of you pretty quick, if you give me any of your cheek," replied the butcher, in an exasperated tone.

"Don't try," replied the bully, "or perhaps I'll serve you worse than the Captain."

The Captain, who heard the dialogue, clapped the butcher on the shoulder.

"I'll give you a sovereign if you'll go in and lick that blackguard," said he.

"I don't want the sovereign; I'll lick him for nothing," said the butcher.

The ring was again formed, and the butcher, who had no delicacy about the way he should deal with his man, now showed that he well deserved the reputation he had previously gained, for in the very first round he regularly "smashed" the bully, who, finding that he was over-matched, fairly took to his heels and bolted out of the ring. The Captain pulled out a couple of sovereigns.

"Here, butcher," said he, "take one for yourself; let the other be spent among your friends in beer."

A loud cheer was raised as the Captain left the ring, and the spectators adjourned to the public-house next to the state room, and continued to imbibe the beer so liberally provided for them until the last "tanner" had vanished into the pocket of mine host.

I afterwards learned that the Captain and the butcher became great cronies; the butcher, however, ever evincing the utmost respect for his swell acquaintance.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE LONDON BURGLAR AND THE LONDON FENCE.

The popular belief that burglars and "fences," *i.e.*, buyers of stolen property, are outcasts of society, living apart in out-of-the-way localities sacred to crime and criminals, is an entire mistake. Some of the most notorious "fences" and burglars, well known in their respective vocations to the police, have figured among the gayest and most unconcerned of the frequenters of places of public resort; occupying houses in the best parts of London, living in something more than even "horse and gig" respectability, and having country houses furnished in comfortable, not to say luxurious, style. Many highly-respectable people in highly-respectable streets would be startled to know who their neighbours were. Perhaps the most authentic evidence of the truth of this statement is to be found in the case of the wealthy "fence," Eneas Giffard, and of the successful "cracksman," John Handley, both of whom were apprehended, convicted, and transported about fourteen years ago. No one of equal consequence in their felonious walks in life have taken their place, or, at least, have been detected and brought to justice recently.

For some time past, a series of mysterious burglaries occurred principally in the City. Property to the extent of £20,000 at least was carried off, and not the slightest clue could be obtained of the burglars. The most

experienced of the metropolitan and City officers were employed to trace out the thieves and the property, but for a long time they could obtain no evidence strong enough to warrant them in taking suspected persons into custody. Their investigations, however, were not entirely without results. They contrived to get a tolerably reliable clue to the hands through which some of the most valuable part of the property made its way, but when they had followed the property to a certain point, the invariable result was that all further trace was lost. The officers, however, were satisfied that burglaries so cleverly planned and successfully executed were the work of one and the same hands. The skill with which the thief or thieves effected an entrance to the apparently well-secured warehouse, the judgment evinced in their selection of the time, and the soundness of their information as to the whereabouts of valuable property, were identical in all the great cases; and as nothing was ever left behind which could lead to the identification and detection of the burglars, everything being done in a most workmanlike and masterly manner, the officers confessed themselves completely at fault.

The most expert "cracksmen," who were offered portions of the large rewards if they would "split," admitted that the robberies were not done by any of the old hands, but were the work of some new and unknown genius.

Concurrently with these great city burglaries, there was a vast number of robberies of ready-furnished lodgings committed at the West-end of the town. Not

a week passed but information of two or three robberies of this kind, in which a large booty was usually carried off, was sent to the Vine-street station-house.

All these robberies were alike in character, and all, it was quite evident, were perpetrated by the same thief. The various descriptions given of the dress, the person, and mode of proceeding, tallied in all respects. The thief was described as a young, well-looking man, attired like a substantial farmer, and having the ruddy look and rough manners of a well-to-do countryman. His plan was to drive up to lodging-houses of the superior class in a cab, pretend he had just come by railway to London on business which would keep him in town for a few weeks, and allege as his reason for calling that he preferred furnished apartments to an hotel. He always had a large and weighty portmanteau with him in the cab, and, after inspecting the apartments, and making minute inquiries about the other occupants, if noblemen or members of Parliament so much the better, he would then take the vacant rooms at once. He contrived to disarm suspicion by his frank manners and plausible statements, and when asked for a reference, would tell the housekeeper that, being a stranger in London, he could only refer to his bankers in the country, displaying at the same time what appeared to be a banker's check book, and then, in order to dispose of any scruples that might remain, would pay in advance a week or fortnight, always making liberal allowance for extras, and, in particular, bargaining for his meals to be served on plate and not plated articles. This plan

succeeded in an endless number of instances, and it is, perhaps, needless to state that after a few days occupancy, the "country farmer" disappeared, having chosen his time so judiciously as to enable him to strip the house of its most portable valuable articles. His portmanteau was left behind, which, when opened, was found to be filled with brickbats and rubbish.

"Whall," said Inspector Baker one morning, "here's another of these cases of robbing furnished lodgings—this time it's within a stone's throw of our station—at the corner of New Burlington-street. You and Gray must take this business in hand at once; we *must* stop this sort of work; it cannot be allowed to go on any longer."

Furnished with all the information that could be collected from the various lodgings that had been visited, Whall and Gray proceeded to take their measures accordingly. They felt pretty sure that Eneas Giffard, who at that time kept a house of ill-fame in Air-street, was connected with the disposal of the produce of the burglaries. They had visited and searched unavailingly the house in Air-street at unexpected times, and had followed Giffard about from place to place; his ostensible business was that of a straw-plait merchant —it was by this means he gained an entrance into different city warehouses, and gathered a fund of useful information as to the arrangements of the establishment—but not a particle of suspected property could they find.

They also kept a strict watch on a female named Hunt, who cohabited with Giffard, and who it was

reasonably surmised was confederated with him in all his transactions. The most valuable piece of information which these officers obtained, related to the description of the person of this robber of ready-furnished lodgings. That description was complete—his clothes, his manner, height, red face, and remarkably-shaped hat, were all minutely described.

One morning Gray was going down Rupert-street, when two persons passed him; one he immediately recognized as a returned "lag," the other was a stranger with a very red face and a hat of a peculiar form. The thought immediately flashed on him that the hat-wearer was the man he was in search of; but having nothing certain to proceed upon, he only stared hard at the pair, who returned the look steadily and passed on. Meeting Whall shortly afterwards, he mentioned his suspicions to him, and it was then agreed to keep a look out in the neighbourhood for the *suspects*.

The very next day they came full upon the hat-wearer, and watched him, unperceived, into Pamphilon's Coffee-house, in Sherrard-street. Whall instantly ran off to the house in New Burlington-street, to fetch one of the servants to identify, if possible, the suspected party. Gray remained on the watch; but before the cab came back, the hat-wearer came out of the coffee-shop, and was about to cross the road, when Gray went up to him and asked him if his name was not Handley. The well-dressed fellow replied roughly in the negative, but Gray at once told him he was an officer, that he must be satisfied on certain points, and that he must

therefore request him to walk in his company to New Burlington-street. The prisoner thus accosted made no objection, and they proceeded a few steps down the street, when Gray was suddenly seized, the stick which his companion carried was inserted between his legs, and he was thrown down. But the officer, being wide awake, was as quick as his assailant: as he was falling he fastened on him, and both came down together. While struggling in the road, the fellow contrived to pull out of his waistcoat pocket a gold scent-bottle, and to throw it away; also to tear from his fingers a couple of diamond rings, and fling them as far as he could. The scent-bottle was recovered and one of the rings, but not the other. At this moment the cab, with Whall and the female cook from New Burlington-street, turned into Sherrard-street. The woman no sooner caught sight of the person who was struggling with Gray, than she made an hysterical gesture of recognition and fainted. The presumed thief was then put into the cab, and loged in the Vine-street station-house.

Gray stopped behind to look after the valuables that had been thrown away, and while thus employed, one of the loose women who frequented the Haymarket came up to him and inquired what the "cove" had done.

"Do you know anything about him?" said Gray.

"I know he's a 'bilk,' for he bilked me," said she, "and that he hangs out at No. 5, Warwick-street, Charing Cross."

When Gray reached the station-house, Inspector Baker told him his prisoner wished to see him, but had

refused to give the least information as to his place of abode. Gray went to the cell in which Handley, for it was really the man, was locked up.

"What have you got to tell me," said Gray; "mind, I don't ask you to confess anything."

"All I want to know," said Handley, "is who 'planted' you on me, and why you did not take me the day before, when you saw me with convict Jim, in Rupert-street."

"I wasn't sure of *you*," said Gray, "I only felt tolerably sure of your hat."

"Hat!" said Handley. "Hah! I ought to have known," giving his hat a kick, "*that* would tell tales. Good morning, old fellow. I havn't anything else to say."

"Well, good morning," said Gray; "I shall know a little more about you after I've been to Warwick-street?"

"What!" said Handley, jumping up with an oath, "who told you about Warwick-street? Now, then, I *know* it was a 'plant;' and I'm regularly sold; I see all about it; but if I go, I know who shall go too. Step it to Warwick-street, and mind you look sharp after Polly Hunt's bunch of keys."

Whall and Gray, certain now of being on the right track, proceeded to No. 5, Warwick-street.

When the door was opened, they passed through the hall into a handsomely-furnished dining-room, and there, on a superb couch, they found Mrs. Hunt reclining, having a crystal basin filled with strawberries and cream

before her, which she was feasting upon with a golden spoon.

"We are officers," said Whall, "and you must consider yourself in custody for receiving stolen goods."

The mouthful of strawberries was instantly ejected; the woman for a moment turned deadly pale, but rallied in an instant, and then made a rush at a desk which was open on the sideboard. She was stopped immediately and secured. The noise of the proceeding brought down the occupant of the first floor, no other than Captain Mangles, the member for Guildford, who had unwittingly taken apartments with a "fence" in the rooms below one of the cleverest cracksmen in London on the floor above him. When informed of his predicament, the honourable member was perfectly astounded; of course, he lost no time in shifting his quarters.

The first thing that attracted the attention of the officers was a magnificent shawl, with which the woman Hunt had enveloped her person. The peculiar pattern and foreign character of the material induced them to look over the numerous hand-bills descriptions of property stolen burglarously or feloniously, and they soon lighted on one which contained an exact description of the shawl in question. The hand-bill was to the effect that a porter, employed by a foreign merchant, named Pigasch, who had taken temporary store-rooms in Salisbury-square, had absconded from his situation, taking with him a box containing lace valued at £600, and a shawl worth £300. The foreign merchant had brought to this country two of these shawls, one of which had been sold to Her

Majesty—the other was carried off by the porter, and, being too costly and too remarkable for open wear, the woman Hunt had converted it into a morning wrapper for her own use. The desk was next searched. A large quantity of gold and bank notes was found; but the greatest prize was the discovery of a document shewing that Eneas Giffard was the possessor of £7,000 in bank stock, and a deposit note, dated a few days back, for £700, placed with the London and Westminster Bank. In addition to this, the lease of twelve houses, recently purchased at Brompton, and the title-deeds of a small farm near the Star, at Hampton—this was the country residence of Eneas Giffard and Mrs. Hunt, and the place whence the strawberries and cream came—were discovered. The value of the property exceeded £10,000. The officers then proceeded to the top room of the house, which was used as a temporary warehouse until an opportunity occurred of disposing of the goods placed there with safety. The room was literally crammed with silks, velvets, ribands, broadcloth, and similar property—the produce of innumerable burglaries. The drawing-room, occupied by Captain Mangles, was decorated with several costly clocks and ornaments—all stolen property; so was the dining-room. In the back room, adjoining the dining-room, a quantity of dirty linen was packed up, as if ready for the laundress. Whall and Gray were curious enough to examine the bundle, and their labour was rewarded by finding the greater part of the Brussels, Valenciennes, and other expensive qualities of lace, stolen from M. Pigasch.

The next step was to visit the apartment occupied by Handley, which was the front room over the drawing-room. Here was a singular scene. The whole of the side of the room where the windows were placed was occupied by a smith's bench—fitted up with lathe, anvil, and vice—supplied with all sorts of files and tools used by locksmiths, and double-carpeted to deaden the sound of work. All round the room impressions in soap had been taken of the wards of different keys, under which were skeleton keys manufactured from the impressions, labelled with a minute description of the rooms or warehouses to which the keys applied. There were about eighty of these soap impressions and skeleton keys; and, from the assistance afforded by the labels, it was afterwards found that upwards of seventy related to burglaries already perpetrated, and ten or a dozen to burglaries to be perpetrated as soon as the time for action was ripe. It turned out that Handley was an exceedingly clever mechanic, and that he brought his skill into profitable operation in his burglarous vocation.

He had been an apprentice to a saddler at the west-end of the town, he had taught himself the art of making skeleton keys, picklocks, and the ordinary tools used by burglars, and had constructed without help a variety of sets, all of which betokened skill and invention of no ordinary character. It was now clear how it happened that the police had been unable to trace out either burglaries or property. Handley made all his own tools, drew all his own plans of premises to be robbed, "worked" by himself, and kept himself only in com-

munication with Giffard, because he was the readiest means of disposing of the produce of the robberies. If the produce of the executed burglary was "heavy goods," as silks, velvets, or broadcloths, were termed, the property was conveyed direct to Warwick-street, and there safely warehoused; if jewellery, plate, watches, and such like portable valuable articles, it was, also, taken to Warwick-street, and manipulated upon by Handley himself. From rings the precious stones would be removed, and the shanks melted—a crucible being always at hand for this kind of work. The gold cases of watches would be, also, fused into a bar, and the same process would take place with brooches, chains, and other articles, the designs of which were peculiar, and likely to lead to detection. There were also files and instruments for removing the crests and initials from forks, spoons, and other silver plate; in short, there was everything that the most accomplished and experienced cracksman could desire to enable him to make identification of valuable property impossible.

While busy with these extraordinary discoveries, a knock came to the door. The constables were in the passage in a moment. The servant who opened the door—she was the mother of the woman Hunt it was afterwards ascertained—was not allowed time to give any signal to the person who sought admission; consequently, when Giffard—for it was he himself—walked into the hall, he found, to his utter dismay, he was in the custody of the police. When taken into the dining-room and searched, about £300 worth of loose diamonds

were found in his pocket-book. These were the produce of a robbery at a jeweller's in Cheapside, and Giffard, who had just received them from Handley, had been out that day, trying to find a customer for them. The man and woman were removed to the station-house, and so was the property. For some days, after the capture of the offenders was known, and the amount and nature of the property found in the house described, the station was like a fair.

The superintendent directed that one of the largest rooms should be appropriated as a show-room, and that parties who had been robbed should be invited to come and inspect the goods. This announcement brought crowds of victims. The value of the miscellaneous goods taken from the house in Warwick-street was between £4,000 and £5,000, and the amount identified was upwards of £3,000.

The police were enabled to get up complete evidence of no fewer than twenty-two cases of receiving stolen goods against Giffard, and seventeen cases of burglary and robbing ready-furnished lodgings against Handley. There were, at least, as many more cases against each prisoner where the moral evidence was sufficiently strong, but the legal evidence too incomplete to warrant an indictment.

As some proof of the large amount of property carried off I will just enumerate a few of the cases of robbery:—M. Pigasch, lace and shawl, valued at £900; Mr. Middleton, jeweller, Cheapside, jewellery and plate, valued at £1,500; Messrs. Griffin, Ironmonger-lane, ribands, &c., £700; Messrs. Gent and Miller, Bread-

street, silks, some hundreds of pounds; Messrs. Crick, Henrietta-street, silk velvets, £400. The diamonds found on Giffard were part of the robbery at Mr. Middleton's.

It need hardly be stated that all three prisoners were tried, convicted, and transported for life. A singular fate attended the two male prisoners—they were both wrecked on the passage out, in different vessels, and drowned. The last that was heard of the woman Hunt was that she had contrived to make her escape from Port Natal—how she got there it is impossible to say—that she made her way safely to New York, and, being a very handsome clever woman, became the wife of a leading tradesman in the Broadway.

With respect to the large amount of property of the culprits it is equally impossible to trace its destination. The securities and title-deeds were made over to the children of the woman Hunt, and the relatives of Giffard, but it is very doubtful whether they ever benefitted a farthing by them. The gold and money got into the hands of the Sheriffs of London, in addition to the remaining part of the goods not owned, amounting to about £1,600. The other portion was, of course, given up to the parties who could identify it. A curious question arose out of this case. The Dean of Westminster, Dr. Ireland, claimed, in virtue of an old charter, the right of inheriting the property of all felons convicted in his district. An action was brought by him against the Sheriffs of London, which terminated in his favour.

CHAPTER XXIV.

FOREIGN SHOPLIFTERS.

Among the most remarkable of the foreign shoplifters who periodically visited the metropolis some years ago, were Eugene and Caroline Lemaire. The mode in which they effected their depredations on jewellers and silk merchants, principally at the West-end, the large amount of the valuables they purloined, and the length of time they carried on their robberies without being either suspected or detected, form a remarkable chapter in Old Bailey annals.

Eugene Lemaire was, unquestionably, the most dexterous "pincher"—that is, stealer of rings, watches, and expensive articles of jewellery—of his day. His sister Caroline was equally adroit in the same line, but her *forte* lay in carrying off whole pieces of silk goods, velvets, and similar portable valuables that could be concealed beneath a large opera wrapper, which she invariably wore when out in her carriage—for she kept a handsome brougham—doing her "morning shopping." One of the leading West-end establishments had suffered to such an extent, that an application was made to the Marlborough Police-court for an experienced officer by the senior partner.

Clements was directed to place himself at the service of the firm, and accordingly the following morning he went to the establishment, the name of which I suppress, for reasons which will be soon understood, and was

ushered into the private counting house, where both senior and junior partner were sitting. The junior partner was not quite pleased at what had been done by his senior, as he feared that exposure would injure the business in the estimation of the wealthy and aristocratic customers whose carriages daily crowded the street.

The system of plunder had, however, assumed such proportions, principally in the jewellery and silk departments, that his objections were overruled, and the officer was permitted to take what steps he thought most suitable to come at the thief.

Clements laid his plan of operation before the firm, and it was approved of. He required a fortnight to make the investigation, and stipulated that he might have daily admittance to the establishment under such a disguise as would disarm suspicion. All this was acceded to. Clements, it was arranged, was to make his appearance the next day in the character of a buyer from America, who was not only about to purchase largely from the firm, but who was desirous of acquiring an insight into the system of business and general details of a concern that employed upwards of one hundred assistants, all of whom were obliged punctually at one o'clock to make their appearance in white neck-cloths, in black dress coat, and with silk stockings and pumps.

Clements having been, in a business way, introduced to the buyers of the various departments, was left to follow out his investigation according to the light of the great experience which he was known to possess in such

affairs. On the third morning he walked into the counting-house, and found both partners there.

"Well, Mr. Clements, have you succeeded in gaining any clue to the party who still continues to plunder us?" asked the head of the firm; "for it was only yesterday that two pieces of rich satin were abstracted from the silk department."

"I think I have," said Clements.

"That is good news, indeed. And are you prepared with sufficient evidence to justify you in taking the thief into custody?"

"I am."

"Then, perhaps, you will be good enough to communicate what you have learned to us."

"The thief," replied the officer, "or rather the thieves, for there are two of them, are at this moment in the establishment. If you will come with me, I think I can point them out."

The two partners and the officer went out of the counting-house, and walked through the various departments as if in friendly chat. As they passed the silk counter, the officer directed his eyes significantly to a foreign lady, young, beautiful, and magnificently dressed, who was examining some expensive silks, and who was being waited upon by one of the principal assistants with great assiduity.

The trio returned to the counting-house.

"The foreign lady is the thief," said the officer, "and the young gentleman with the diamond pin in his cravat, who is serving her, is her accomplice."

"Oh! indeed," said the junior partner, with great asperity. "I must tell you plainly, your judgment is quite at fault here. That lady is one of our best customers; she is under the protection of Lord ——, and her purchases are paid for regularly by check from the nobleman himself."

"I know that," said Clements. "I know more than that; she has a villa at East Sheen, she is visited twice a week by your assistant with the diamond pin, and if a search-warrant is taken out, I do not hesitate to say you will find plenty of proof that she has been almost daily robbing you. The reason she has not been found out before is, because the young fellow who always serves her is a confederate."

"There, again, Mr. Clements," said the junior, angrily, "you are completely mistaken. That young gentleman, Sir, is my nephew."

"It may be so," replied Clements, "still the facts are as I have stated. You employed me to trace out the thieves; I have done so, and if you want to carry the matter further, I am in a condition to prove all I have stated."

"I must beg you will refrain from such remarks in my presence," said the junior partner, with increased anger. "My nephew's integrity is beyond suspicion, and I must, therefore, wish you good morning. I never went willingly into this inquiry, and am not surprized at the failure of the plan. Your expenses, according to agreement, shall be paid."

Clements took his leave, and the next day he

received a check for twenty guineas, with thanks for his trouble, and an intimation that his further services would not be required.

"Then you were really out in your guess?" said I to Clements, when he was relating to me the circumstance some years afterwards.

"I am not quite sure of that," replied he, with a meaning look; "but this I am sure of, that the following week the villa at Sheen was sold, and the nephew was never afterwards seen at the establishment."

About a year after this, a great number of robberies of silks and jewellery were reported at the Vine-street station-house. The thieves were described as foreigners —a young man and a young woman. The description of the female thief tallied exactly with that of the carriage lady who had visited the establishment so successfully where Clements had been professionally employed.

Information was one morning brought to the court that a foreigner had just been detected in stealing a diamond ring, value fifty guineas, from a jeweller's shop in Ludgate-hill. Clements proceeded to the shop, and found a young foreigner in custody. A hasty search of his person was made for the ring, but nothing was discovered. A cab was called, and the prisoner was put into it, and during the ride to Marlborough Street Police-court he was closely watched by the officer to prevent him from getting rid of any stolen article that might perhaps make evidence against him. When arrived at the court, Wilks, the then jailor, thought it expedient to

put the foreigner into a cell by himself; and suspecting that the ring might possibly be found on a closer scrutiny, he compelled the prisoner to strip, and undergo another and more complete search. No ring was found —the jailor still was not satisfied. Knowing something of the legerdemain dexterity possessed by the superior class of thieves, he made the prisoner stand up and extend his arms against the wall, so as to prevent him from passing the ring about should he really be in possession of it. This did not produce the ring. The jailor, however, continued his search, and noticing that the prisoner had an unusual quantity of black curly hair, he thrust his hands through it, and out fell the ring. The prisoner, while being searched, had actually passed the ring from hand to hand, lodging it in different situations with such rapidity as to elude even practised eyes, and, at last, planted it in his hair, where it would have remained concealed had it not been for the perseverance of the jailor.

The prisoner was Eugene Lemaire, afterwards known by the sobriquet of the "pincher." The next step was to capture the female. Clements, who felt pretty certain he was on the right scent, immediately posted off to the senior partner who had employed him in the previous investigation, and made him acquainted with the apprehension of Eugene Lemaire, the brother. The senior partner told him that such an individual, who had passed himself off as an attaché of the French embassy, had frequently honoured the establishment with his presence, and had made considerable purchases, but that since his

visits began a great many articles of jewellery, such as diamond rings, bracelets, and watches, had been missed. The lady, however, had not "shopped" there since the *dénouement* which I have related. Her address, however, was known. She lived in Hertford-street in great style, and kept what is termed a "reception house," to which only a select party of noblemen, amongst whom was a noble lord then connected with the ministry, was admitted.

Clements immediately requested an interview in a private room with the sitting magistrate, Mr. Chambers, for the purpose of asking for a search warrant, and also a warrant to apprehend Caroline Lemaire. This was a matter of some delicacy. The magistrate was not unacquainted with the high influence which this woman had at command. She was the *chère amie* of a noble lord then holding high position in the government, and who had, of course, great influence with the Home-office. A false step would be productive of inconvenience too serious to be encountered except on the clearest justification.

The magistrate, however, was perfectly independent, as all metropolitan magistrates are, and, on hearing what Clements had to say, immediately granted the warrants. The officer, accompanied by Schofield, at once proceeded to Hertford-street. The lady was at home, and was just preparing to sit down to dinner with a well-known marquis, whose establishment in Paris was remarkable for its costly appointments. Of course the appearance of the officers put an immediate stop to the enjoyment

of the little dinner party. The officers produced their authority, and commenced their search. In a very short time they had accumulated valuables of all kinds sufficient to fill several large trunks. The value of the property thus recovered was enormous.

The lady, in her elegant dinner toilette, was put into a cab, brought to the court, and placed at the bar with her accomplice. Neither of the prisoners betrayed the least emotion. The lady stood like a tragedy queen at the bar, displaying an air of supreme indifference. The brother also exhibited an amount of nonchalance, considering that transportation stared him in the face, quite unaccountable. The number of charges brought against both was perfectly incredible, and the most singular part of the affair was that two-thirds of the sufferers did not know they had been robbed until the articles found in the female prisoner's house were produced and identified by them.

I shall not go into the voluminous evidence, the numerous remands, and the ultimate committal of the prisoners on at least a dozen clear cases. In due course the trial came on at the Old Bailey, and both were convicted, and sentenced to seven years' transportation.

"I could have made a rare good thing by this affair," said Clements, "had I listened to the offers that were made to me to 'stall off' the principal witnesses. The prisoners, especially the lady, had friends among the highest nobility, and everything was done that was possible to get them off, but there were one or two ugly

customers among the prosecutors, and it was in vain to hope that the evidence would break down in their cases. I could not make out for some time how it was that the prisoners appeared to have so little care about the result of the proceedings against them, but I had a suspicion."

"And what was that suspicion?" said I.

"I cannot quite inform you," said Clements; "but this I can swear to, that three days after the conviction I met both prisoners walking about the streets of London."

"Do you mean to say," said I, "that, after being sentenced to seven years' transportation, they were allowed to make their escape from prison?"

"I mean to say nothing of the sort," replied Clements. "I only say that they had good friends at court. They *knew* too much, and the noble lord who was the lady's friend is supposed to have exercised his influence on their behalf. But the fact is just as I have stated; they were at liberty in a few days, and both in Paris, not a pin the worse, a week after conviction."

CHAPTER XXV.

SAM FURZEMAN, THE NIGHT-CONSTABLE OF ST. GILES'S.

One of the most remarkable men of his day was Sam Furzeman, the night-constable and street-keeper of St. Giles's. The district in which Sam had to discharge his dangerous duties was one of the worst in the metropolis. It was peculiarly the "Irish district," and constant scene of those terrific outrages and brawls which seem to be the atmosphere in which the lower order of Irish, at that time—I speak of nearly forty years ago—preferred to exist. The establishment of the police has done much to purify and pacify the various Irish localities; still there is enough yet left, wherever this turbulent race congregates—and the Irish seldom amalgamate with any people amongst whom they may cast their lot—to show what they must have been when there was no sufficient force conveniently at hand to overawe and overpower rioters.

Every Monday morning the avenues of Marlborough-street Police-court were crowded by men and women, with the unmistakeable characteristics of the Irish race imprinted indelibly on their countenances and dress, waiting to give evidence for or against, according to clanship, no matter on what side the truth was, in cases of assault, where some of the ringleaders had been captured. The black eyes, broken heads, torn garments, and half savage and drunken condition both of men and women, betokened the semi-barbarian breed—the

frightful character of the "rows" in which they had been recently engaged, and the ferocity of the combatants. It had come at last to be the regular practice for the denizens of one Irish locality to assemble on Sunday mornings, and to proceed to another locality, there to make an attack with sticks, brickbats, pokers, and any weapon that could be laid hold of, upon every one they encountered, and thus to get up a general scrimmage. The undying feud between Munster and Connaught men—the constant brawls and fights of Buckridge-street against Peter-street and Calmell-buildings, against everything and everybody—grew to such a pitch at last that the magistrates were wholly at a loss to deal with the evil. The street-keepers, street-constables, and officers were constantly engaged in quelling these rows, or executing warrants against offenders wherever they could be found. The service of these warrants was always one of great danger. The Irish invariably made common cause with their countrymen, and many an officer and constable, when in the execution of his duty, has been treated with such brutality as to endanger limb, and frequently life.

Fortunately, however, for the peace of the district, Sam Furzeman was appointed to the post of night-constable and street-keeper of St. Giles's. A man better qualified in all respects for the office could not have been found in all London. Sam Furzeman, as many will yet recollect, was noted for his steady courage, his bodily strength, and his contempt for the brutal ferocity of the denizens of Irish localities. He was about

six feet high, muscular to a remarkable degree, and equally well able to use fists and feet. Whenever an Irish row occurred he was instantly among the combatants; without a moment's hesitation he would seize upon the most powerful of the fighting ruffians, drag him away by main strength—one hand on the collar of his prisoner, and with the other knocking down right and left the savages who attempted rescue. Such was his promptitude and prowess that he became a perfect terror to those who had hitherto set all the lawful authorities, whose duty it was to keep the peace, at defiance. The execution of assault warrants became easy and safe, the regular officers had only to procure the assistance of Sam, who knew pretty well where to find the culprit, and who was up to every "dodge" that could be practised to conceal the offender; and woe to the individual who, after receiving a message that Sam Furzeman "wanted him" would dare to disobey the summons.

I had heard a good deal about the strange scenes that occurred at the houses frequented by the labouring Irish, and especially on the occasion of "raffles," got up sometimes to raise a fund, to set up some new comer, sometimes to assist in releasing a countryman whom justice had overtaken, and I resolved to become an eye-witness of the truth of the circumstances detailed to me by the street-constables. I visited one evening the Coalyard in St. Giles's, in which was a public-house, the head-quarters of the St. Giles's labouring Irish, where I was told a raffle was to come off that evening.

I went into a large room lighted by two gas-lamps, and furnished with strong tables and benches. The fire-irons were chained to the fire-place. This, it appears, was a necessary precaution, as on the least approach to a row—and not one moment was safe against an impromptu quarrel—the first things to which a rush was made were the poker and tongs, to be used with a recklessness that made it truly astonishing murder was not constantly committed. The room was already nearly full; men in their working dress, principally Irishmen, strong, sensual, and sinister-looking, and women, hard featured and brawny limbed, all engaged in drinking, singing, screeching, and vociferating in their gibberish, creating a din surpassing anything that Babel could have furnished.

The raffle went on pretty well until a big beetle-browed fellow with a Munster visage came in and shouldered a passage to a table already crowded, but at which he forced his way into a place. Scowling looks were directed to him from all sides. Muttered oaths in Irish were heard, but all were disregarded. The fellow without ceremony laid hold of the quart pot out of which the party, on whom he had intruded, were drinking beer, and defiantly emptied it at a daught. A roar as if so many human devils had broken loose was raised in all parts of the room. Instantly the gas was turned off, and a fearful scene of riot took place. The Munster man now laying hold of the quart pot, struck right and left, prostrating all who came within the sweep of his powerful arm, and several soon fell

covered with hideous gashes on the skull. I tried to get away, but found two gigantic Irishmen had placed their backs against the door, and with their iron-shod shoes kicked savagely at every one who attempted to quit the place. My position was anything but a pleasant one, especially as the fighting became general and indiscriminate. Some got under the tables, some under the benches, to protect themselves. Luckily a big fellow close to me received a blow from one of the legs of the table, which had been broken off to serve as a shillelagh, and he fell against me senseless, shielding me with his huge body, which I took care to keep between myself and danger. This scene continued for about ten minutes in all its fury, when in a minute it became hushed as if by magic. I heard the name of "Sam Furzeman" whispered, and in another minute the door was driven in and the two fellows hurled into the middle of the floor. A tall man walked right into the room, and fixing his eyes on the fellow who had occasioned the disturbance, called out in a strong, resolute voice,

"Come out, Mick Cassidy."

"I'd like to see anny dozen of you thry to take me out," said the fellow, raising the quart pot menacingly.

The words were hardly out of his lips before the weapon was twisted from his grasp, and he was seized by the neck and actually torn over benches and tables by Furzeman, for it was the redoubtable St. Giles's constable who had come on the scene of action. The fellow was a powerful man and struggled desperately;

but he was like a child in the hands of his captor, and though he bit, kicked, and fought with desperation, clinging to everything he could lay hands on, he never succeeded in delaying for a moment his onward progress to the watch-house, which was situated at one end of the Coalyard.

I had taken advantage of the entrance of Furzeman to make my exit from the tap-room, well satisfied at having escaped with a whole skin. As the watch-house —there were no station-houses at that time—was close at hand, I followed the mob, and being known to some of the watchmen, gained admission without difficulty. After the furious struggle in which Furzeman had been engaged I expected to see him in a state of great heat and discomposure. The reverse was the fact. He took his seat in the night constable's chair, without the least appearance of having just been engaged in a desperate personal affray, coolly and deliberately, and told the watch-house keeper in attendance to put Cassidy at the bar. The Irishman was forced into the dock, thoroughly subdued, as was evident by his casting most beseeching and deprecatory looks at the night constable.

"This is the third time this week, Cassidy, you have been here," said Furzeman. "I'll take care to-morrow, when you get before the 'beak,' that you shan't play up your games for some months to come."

"Don't be hard on me this wanst, yer hanner," said the ruffian; "it was only the dhrop of drink in me."

"You are always drunk at somebody's expense," said Furzeman. "Put up the witnesses."

"Plaze your honour," said one of the crowd, "there's nobody to the fore. Jack Connor's tuk to the hospital wid his eye smashed; Bill Looney is getting his head strapped up; and Mistris Boyle ain't come to her sinses yet, which Mick Cassidy knocked out on her wid the quart pot."

"I'll be on my oath I didn't strike nobody," said Cassidy; "that murthering blaggard, Jack Connor, kilt me firsht wid the quart pot."

"I seen Jack Connor do it, and I'll oath it, yer honor," shouted half-a-dozen voices.

"I know all about it," replied Furzeman, with a contemptuous look at the crowd; "you'd take your oath either way for a rotten potato; but that shan't help you, Cassidy, this time, for I'll go against you myself for biting my hand, you Irish brute." Furzeman here held up his hand, and showed a tremendous wound inflicted by the teeth of the brute at the bar.

By this time I had had quite enough of personal experience of Irish rows. Thenceforward I confined myself to reporting them—dressing up the facts in such a way as to hide the hideous features, and to bring out the comic points of which they were susceptible.

Two years after this scene I saw a tall, gaunt figure sitting at the "Marlborough Head," in front of the bar, apparently in the last stage of consumption, or some deadly wasting disease. I looked hard at him.

"What!" said I, "can this be Sam Furzeman?"

"All that's left of him," said Sam, shaking his head, "and there won't be even that much in another month."

I learnt afterwards that about six months previously Furzeman was called to quell an Irish row in Peter-street, between some Irish haymakers, Protestants and Papists. With his usual fearlessness, he laid hold of the ringleader, and was dragging him off, when his foot slipped, and he fell. Instantly half-a-dozen reapers jumped on him, and drove the heels of their heavy shoes into his back repeatedly before he could regain his footing.

Furzeman, whose temper was never put out of the way except by cowardly brutality, was thoroughly roused; he inflicted a fearful punishment on his assailants with the head of his brass staff, which then was surmounted with a crown. At one blow he split one fellow's ear in two, and with a second drove every front tooth down another brute's throat. This was his last adventure in the Irish locality. He had received mortal internal injury from the kicks and jumps on his body. He wasted away from that day, and died in about three weeks after I saw him. On opening his body one of his kidneys was found to be fearfully ruptured.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A "SPECIAL" INVITATION TO MOOR PARK—THE "KING OF THE LINKMEN."

THERE is an old proverb that says no good exists without its corresponding evil. How far its truth was illustrated in the following little narrative intelligent readers shall determine for themselves. The rise of gas companies proved the downfall of linkmen. Those ever indispensible attendants at the opera and West-end *soirées* are now all but matters of history. What the introduction of gas failed to accomplish, the intervention of the new police effected. Linkmen gradually disappeared—their functions were superseded by the police—and the last of the fraternity, Paddy Carey, the "King of the Linkmen," years ago retired from "the profession," leaving nothing for posterity to remember him by but the reputation of his ready repartee, and a professional renown that has never since been equalled. "Paddy Carey," however, was not his real name; it was the cognomen conferred upon him by his noble patrons, and thus became the name he was best known by among opera-goers. James Leary was his patronymic, to which, after finally closing his public duties and retiring to his family estate in Murphy-square—wherever that might be—he modestly attached the regal O!

Paddy Carey used to pride himself on the great and original improvements he introduced into his luminous profession. He would proudly claim the honour of

being the inventive genius who substituted the "lamp" for the halfpenny link then in common vogue, and also of having set the fashion of exhibiting to his aristocratic nocturnal patrons a "bit of clane shirt and a pair of whole brogues," in place of the bare legs and ragged costume which distinguished the "dirty bogtrotters from Ballymadoodle," as he contemptuously described his rival countrymen linkmen. By the exercise of his humourous audacity he contrived to obtain many a coin after all the ruck of the noisy and officious brood of link flourishers had abandoned the chance as hopeless; but what he valued himself most upon was at having once extracted a sixpence, the only instance on record, from Lord Monteagle.

It was on the occasion when, as Mr. Spring Rice, his lordship had been appointed to the high office of Chancellor of the Exchequer.

"I'd tried hard at him for six or seven sasons," narrated Paddy, "to see the colour of his money, but divil a scurrick was I able to screw out ov him. One night I seen him come out of the French Ambassador's, looking about for his carriage. 'Spring Rice, me boy,' says I, taking off my hat as bould as brass; 'now you've got the Threasury, wid the nice little pickings, you'll be able to stand a twopenny link, and can stick the price down in yer nixt Budget.' Be dad if he didn't burst into a fit of laughing, and pitched a tanner into me hat. Maybe I didn't spit on the bit of silver for luk, and melt it into whiskey at "Stunning Joe Banks's," in Buckridge-street."

But the rise of Paddy Carey's fame and fortune had its origin in this honourable incident.

"The Duke of Beaufort was my best friend," said he one day to me, when loquaciously disposed; "there was always a shilling, and 'How do you do, Paddy,' whenever he clapped eyes on me at the opera. One night, just when he pitched a bob into my hat, I heard something jingle. Be the hole in my coat, when I tuk my hat under the lamp, what should I see sparkling like the stars but an iligant diamond ring. The next morning I on wid me Sunday coat, and aff I wint to Beaufort House, and sint up my rispicts to his grace, wid a hope that he would be plased at finding his ring safe and sound agin. Be jabers, down came the grand laced flunkey wid his grace's compliments and thanks, and a goulden sovereign for me honesty. The next night, it was about a wake or so afther, when I saw his grace, he called me to him, 'Paddy,' says he, 'take that and wear it as a mark of the estame in which meself and friends hould ye.' And what do ye think it was? Why, a grand silver opera badge, wid a fine inscription engraved in big letters on it—'Presented to James Leary by several noblemen and gentlemen, for his good conduct, his honesty, and faithful discharge of his duties as principal linkman at Her Majesty's Theatre.' Wasn't I a proud man; maybe I didn't thank his grace in good sound Irish for his noble ginerosity, and perhaps I didn't wear me silver opera badge at every grand party; proud was I ov it, for I found that his grace the duke had ax'd the Marquis of Waterford, Earl Waldegrave,

Lord George Beresford, Lord William Beresford, and a power of grate gintlemen, to subscribe to me badge, and every one dropped his tin like rale thrumps as they were. But powers be good to me, his grace always brought me luck, and the biggest piece was when he got me an invitation from the grate Marquis of Westminster himself to Moor Park."

"How did that happen?" inquired I.

"Well," says Paddy, "the eldest son of the noble marquis was after coming of age, and all the world, except me, was axed to Moor Park. Be dad, says I to meself, but I'll ax his grace to get lave to me to go down wid me link, and call up the carriages. When I spoke to his grace about it, I tuk me oath, if the marquis would have me, I'd cut a shine wid a clane shirt and my grand opera badge. His grace at first shook his head, but I was not to be stalled off, so I said I'd promise on the word of an Irishman to powder me wig if I got a lave. 'Powder your wig,' says his grace, laughing a bit; '*that* I think will decide the matter. I'll certainly mention what you propose to do to the marquis,' and, be me sowl, so he did, and so I got a card to go down to Moor Park, wid an order for rations on the steward. Och, but it was the best day's work I ever did, and some fine day I'll tell you all about it."

Before entering upon this remarkable event in Mr. O'Leary's life, I may as well give his own version of the cause that impelled him towards the linkman's profession.

"When I firsht cum to London I engaged meself in the mortar-mixing line, and I tried me hand at 'going up the Jacob' (carrying a hod of mortar or bricks up the ladder), but I got a bad tumble one day, and this lamed me, so that I could only take a handy job now and again. I got something to do at Holford House, in the Ragency Park, which was then being built, and whin it was roofed down came Mr. Holford to look how the work went on. The labourers, and there was a power of 'em, says to me, 'Pat, you've the gift of the gab, jist ax his hanner to let us drink good luck to the new roof.' Well, I thought no harm about it, and I watches to put in a word, and jist as Mr. Holford was going out wid the foreman I pulled a leg, and out wid it about what the workmen wished.

"'By all means,' said he to the foreman, 'let the men have a barrel of beer among them.'

"'I'll be sure and take care your hanner's wishes are attended to,' said the foreman, and bows the gintleman into his carriage.

"Mr. Holford's carriage had no sooner drove away than he calls out to the cash-keeper, 'Barnes! here; take this fellow'—maning me—'to the pay-table, give him his wages, and turn him off the premises.' Be me sowl I was bundled out like a mangy dog wid his tail betwixt his legs, and as I wint away I couldn't help thinking what a pretty kittle ov fish I'd made of me mornin's work. 'Kape up your pecker, Paddy,' says I to meself; 'maybe this will be the makin ov yer fortin'; and bedad I wasn't far out, for I met a Munster boy

who tould me to buy a halfpenny link and try me hand at lighting gentlefolks to their carriages. I took the hint, and in less than a wake I was at the top ov the tree. But now I'll tell you about me divarsions at Moor Park.

"The firsht thing to think about," said Paddy, in continuation of the narrative of his visit to Moor Park, "was how to get down there wid me lame leg. Aff I wint to the Dials to borry Jack Callaghan's moke.

"'Sure I'd lend yer the baste,' says he, 'but he's down along wid Barney, me son, at Bow Common, doing a bit av brick work.'

"I got to Bow, and, afther a hard bargain betooxt Barney and me, I got the lave of his donkey and trap for three days. There was the divil's own job to catch the brute. Barney wid his wooden leg, and me wid me lame leg, were more 'an two blessed hours at it chasing the ugly baste, afore we could get the bridle over his neck. At last the donkey was put to the trap, and I got home to me ould hooman in time to see her soak the starch into the collars of me two rale Irish linen shirts, so that they'd stick up over me two ears as stiff as bullock's horns. Thin me Sunday tail-coat and waistcoat wid brass buttons, and me grand silver opera badge, were all packed up in a bag, and so aff I set, me an' a boy from the Dials to help wid the donkey, and a thrifle of silver in me pocket. Be dad, Sir, the divil was in the ould donkey—we were five hours goin' five miles—the boy leathering the donkey's jacket wid the saft end of an ould broom handle all the blessed way.

"'Come out o' that,' says I. 'We shall be pulled

by the Society for Promotin' Cruelty to Animals; but we can't go back now; so we must take the marrowbone stage like other gintlemen.'

"And, be me sowl, we had to walk every step to Moor Park, and to pay turnpikes until me heart was broken intirely, and the divil a ha'penny was left to pay the last one except me grand silver opera badge, which I left wid the turnpike man for the loan of half-a-crown.

"At last we got to the park, and then all me thrubbles were over. Be me oath, Sir, I got rations for meself and donkey, and a bed in one of the stables for meself and boy, and maybe we wasn't in clover. Och! Sir, the donkey didn't know half his good luck, and the baste began to think he was somebody else, bekase you see he was for the firsht time in his life lodged in a fine stable, and had his bags blown out wid hay and oats three times a day. And maybe me and the boy didn't faste on the fat of the land, nayther; lashins of twenty year ould ale able to make a cat spake, and no end of slivers of cowld bafe, roast and boiled, that would have made a bishop's teeth wather. Thim's the very laste of the good things we had to our own cheek; and as for Paddy, och! be the hole in me coat, I was axed into the lower servants' hall at night to tip 'em an Irish stave, and me company was so well liked, that I never come away but wid me skinful of fine ould red port and golden sherry, let alone a drain or two of rale French brandy to kape the cowld aff me stomach.

"Well, yer honner, the next day, you may belave me, I come out as strong as mustard. There was me

clane shirt, and maybe I didn't forget to let the grate folks see it wasn't a dickey, for I'd a good bit pulled out at me waistband, and the collar wint right up over me ears. An' didn't I lay on the powther nayther; me head and me whiskers held half a peck of flour, and, taking me whole turn out, I'll go bail but the Lord Chancellor of England never cut a greater shine.

"But me grand opera badge was wantin, and I was onasy about it, for if the Marquis should come to the fore and miss it, be jabers he'd think I had taken him in, and that cut me up mightily. Well, as there was nix for me to do in the way of me profession till the evening, all I'd to think about was to strut over the park, show me shapes, and make me bow to the grand company as they come out of their carriages. Be jabers wasn't some av 'em glad to see me.

"'Is that you, Paddy?'

"'Indade it is, me Lord,' says I.

"'Didn't know a bit av you, Misther Paddy, in your fashionable costhume.'

"'Maybe not, yer ladyship,' says I; 'you're not the only one, for his honner, the Dutch Ambassador, tuk me for his equal and gave me an illegant low bow as he passed.'

"'Powers above, here comes the Duke of Beaufort, wid a sight of fine ladies—what will I do now?' says I.

"'You've kept your word about the powther like a man, Paddy,' says his grace, looking all over me wid the gratest admerashin; 'but where's the grand silver opera badge?'

"'Whisht, your grace,' says I, 'be aisy wid me saycret, and if you'll let me spake a private word, I'll tell no lie about it.'

"His grace heard what I'd to say about the turnpike-man, and, like a noble gintleman as he was, he called one of his grooms, gave him five shillings, and tould him to ride aff an' bring back the grand silver opera badge.

"Before it was time for the gentry to be stirring, his grace the Duke of Beaufort and the noble Marquis, wid a posse of fine ladies, came over the park, as luck would have it, close to where I was taking a stroll. Plaz'd and proud was I when his grace brought the ladies to see me wid me grand opera badge, and me illigant turn out. There was the beautiful Lady Ailesbury, and Lady Blackwood, and Lady Seymour. Och, you should have seen the eyes they made at me, and the Duke laughing and joking all the time wid 'em. I made a bow, and took off me hat.

"'Oh, we all know Mr. Paddy Carey right well,' says Lady Blackwood.

"'And maybe,' says I, 'it's Paddy Carey that knows yer ladyship and yer beautiful sister better. It's the likes av me that have shown ye to yer carriages often enough to make a bet that I'll point out which owns the natest leg and foot ov the pair.'

"Och, Sir, the ladies laughed, and the Duke laughed, and offered to take me bet; but the ladies ran away, and the Duke and the Marquis went after them. I'll go bail there never was such a calling up of the

carriages before or since at Moor Park. I was the boy to do the trick handsomely, and, be me sowl, me ould hat and me pockets were soon filled with half-crowns and shilling pieces. Och, there never was sitch a day for Paddy before nor since."

"I suppose," said I, "you took proper care of your riches when you got them?"

"Hah!" said Paddy, shaking his head, "there was a bit of bad luck for me at last, and this is how it came about. When I got back to the ould hooman, I turned me silver into gould, and put four sovereigns in a bag, which, for safety, I shov'd under the coals in me coal-box. Well, down came Barney to settle for the donkey, and brought two or three boys to have a drop of whiskey out of the money. Bad luck to me if I didn't forget me bag whin the devils made up a fire to bile the wather to mix the punch wid. When I came to recollect me money the next morning it was gone, and Barney, the big blaggard, brought me the bag, which he said he picked out of the ashes, but the divil a skurrick was in it. You may take your oath that Barney never tasted a drop av whiskey at my expense after that. I'd Bible oath he'd the money—though he offered to take oaths as high as his head that he never sot eyes on it—bekase a month afterwards he bought a fine new trap, and sot up on his own hook in the ginger-pop line."

CHAPTER XXVII.

"THIEVES'" HOUSES.

It is even now occasionally a work of danger for the police, strong and organized as they are, to apprehend thieves of the more desperate class. Before the police force was established the task of caption was one of enormous peril. The thieves of past days had their head-quarters in various localities—east, west, north, and south—all of which were well known to the detective officers, and it was only officers of a particular district who could, with any chance of success or safety, make a capture in special localities. At the East-end of the town, the "Black Horse" in Wentworth-street was the most noted. In the Borough, the "King's Head" in Kent-street, and the "Red Lion" in the Mint, were sacred to all but known burglars. Dover-street and Friar-street, Blackfriars-road, had their special houses of resort. Duck-lane, Westminster, was pretty well filled with "thieves' cribs." Drury-lane had Ben Lewis's — Soho, the "Cock;" St. James's, the "Crown," and half-a-dozen others in and about the Haymarket.

But many of these places have disappeared, others have changed tenants, and taken up new and purified characters—it is not, however, of the exploits of the old police that I intend to speak just now.

The establishment of the police force has done much to mitigate the ruffianism and the exclusivism of the

old thieves. Better organized, composed of younger and stronger men, they soon proved themselves more than a match for any combination, even of the most determined and desperate characters. But the new police did not gain the mastery without fearful and deadly struggles. The public know little or nothing of the numbers that have been kicked and beaten to death in the public streets and thieves' resorts, or mutilated horribly for life. I could without difficulty count up a score of young, able-bodied constables who have been destroyed by sheer violence, within the period of a very few years after the police was established. A frightful history might be written of the brutalities committed on them, in Irish districts particularly; but desperate thieves and Irish ruffians did not always escape punishment. The constables were selected for duty in particular localities, on account of their pluck, strength, and determination, and the result has proved that roughs of all kinds have found their masters; and localities that no stranger, even in broad daylight, dared to venture into, may now be traversed at all hours in the night with the same security that one may walk down Regent-street at noonday. But, it was not only by down-right brute force that the police gained the upper-hand; it required a good deal of address, and not a little humouring of the rules tacitly established among the thieves themselves. For instance, at a recognized house of resort for thieves, a constable would have little difficulty in taking into custody a culprit "on suspicion," provided he did not venture into their pene-

tralia or show his staff. Woe to the policeman who should be so incautious, or so foolhardy, as to disregard this latter condition. It may be asked how it happened that public-houses, known as the resort of thieves, were not reported to the licensing magistrates, and proceedings taken against the landlords with the view of getting their licences suspended. The reason simply is—that it was found best to wink at such houses, because in case of need the police knew where to go in order to apprehend their man. If the *known* houses were suppressed, the thieves would resort to *unknown* houses, and the difficulties of the police would only be multiplied without the list of thieves' houses being either diminished or suppressed.

The latest act of violent resistance to the police which I recollect, happened a few years ago at the "Cock" in New-street, on an occasion when Police-constable Dupierre of the C division, a remarkably active detective and thief-taker, went with Police-sergeant Gray to apprehend a burglar for breaking into a gambling-house in Air-street, kept by Ben Lewis. The burglary occurred, of course, at night. The burglar, who evidently knew the premises well—perhaps was *en rapport* with one of the servants of the establishment—had contrived to break into the house through the cellar, and to carry off a tolerable booty in plate and other portable valuables. The constable on duty, a new hand, but otherwise a sharp fellow, was of course summoned to the station-house and questioned. As a matter of course he was to consider himself "suspended" until

the burglar was in custody. He gave a tolerably minute account of every suspicious character that had passed through his beat during the night. His attention had been particularly attracted to a short, stout man, who had passed him twice, the last time with a bag under his arm.

"Was it a green baize bag?" said Dupierre, who volunteered his help to get his brother constable out of trouble.

"It was," replied the constable.

"Had the man dark curly hair?"

"He had."

"Did he limp slightly?"

"He did."

"Then," said Dupierre, "it was Tiny Mason who did the job, and I'll pick him up at the 'Cock' to-night. Will you go with me, Gray?"

The constable assented, and at night they both went to the "Cock." The room, sacred to thieves and their ladies, was on the first floor. It was known as "Towzer's Club;" and it was here that Tiny Mason spent his evenings and his dishonest gains.

Before going up stairs, Gray cautioned the constable not to enter the room, but to call Tiny Mason out, being sure the summons would be obeyed without resistance. The constable, Dupierre, disregarded this wise advice. He threw open the door and walked in; Gray followed, but kept close to the door, anticipating mischief. The room was crowded — about fifty well-known thieves and prostitutes were there

assembled in the height of their coarse jollity—singing and drinking going on merrily. Dupierre soon singled out Tiny Mason, who was at a table about the centre of the room. Dupierre beckoned to him.

"Who the —— are you?" said Mason.

"Come out, Tiny, I want you for the job in Air-street," said the constable.

"Where's your warrant?" said Mason, doggedly.

"Here," replied Dupierre, producing his staff.

He had better have attempted to swallow it. In an instant the gas was put out—the constable was hemmed in, and though a strong man and a desperate fighter, his strength and resolution were of no avail whatever. He was knocked down instantly and fearfully maltreated. Some well-natured thief, as he rushed to the door, whispered to Gray—

"Cut your lucky, my boy, or you'll come in for it next."

Gray saw at once it was hopeless to attempt to assist his brother constable. The room was in darkness, and the thieves were making their escape through the windows and by the door—Tiny Mason among the foremost. Gray did all that lay in his power—he rushed to the window and called for assistance. Several constables quickly made their appearance, but the gaol-birds had flown; there was nobody in the room but the constable Dupierre, who was lying on the floor in a pool of his own blood, a senseless mass of bruises and wounds. The injuries the constable sustained kept him under the doctor's hands for a week. As soon as he was able to

go on duty, his first act was to look out for Tiny Mason. Grown wiser by the lesson he had just received, he took care as soon as he had come upon the trail to pay respect to the regulations which the thieves expected to be observed. Tiny Mason, when properly summoned, gave himself up to the officer without the least hesitation, and soon afterwards suffered transportation for his offence.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A SPORTING "GENT."

In the heyday period of betting houses and racing sweeps—the saturnalia of blacklegs and swindlers of all grades, from the broken-down lordly gambler of Belgravia to the starveling half-crown book-maker of Bride-lane—there figured at the swell betting houses round the Haymarket and Leicester-square a portly individual of superior address and unexceptionable exterior, the *beau ideal* of a country gentleman, familiarly known as "Squire Brown." The "knowing ones" marked him at once for their own. He was evidently a man of means, being always flush of money, and attended by a smart groom, who took care to let everybody know that the "Squire" had some good shooting to compliment his friends with, over his well-preserved manor in Devonshire.

The "Squire" was a free better on all the crack races. He was kindly "put on the winner" by those

who professed to be in the "secret;" but somehow the favourite never won, and his balances were always heavily against him, which, however, being paid punctually, of course, his credit became thoroughly established. For the next "Derby" it was understood the "Squire" meant to put the "pot on"—that is, to bet heavily. He had no difficulty in making a book, most of the leading men in the ring booked his bets without hesitation, and it was known that on this particular event he stood to win or lose a large sum of money.

The "Derby" came off, and the result was against the "Squire." On the settling day the "Squire" was "nowhere;" sinister whispers began to be circulated, and, at last, it became perfectly clear that he had "levanted." Police-serjeant Gray, who had occasionally looked in at the betting houses—professionally—acquired thus a slight acquaintance with the "Squire," and his doings, but had no suspicion of his real character, or, if he had, it was set at rest by meeting him one day in Lower Grosvenor-street, and seeing him enter the house of Mrs. Mansfield, a widow lady of rank and fortune, where he appeared to be known, and on familiar visiting terms.

Of course, Gray was soon put into possession of the fact that the "Squire was wanted," and that his whereabouts was nowhere to be discovered. On the morning of the "Derby" settling day, a message came to the Vine-street station-house, requesting the attendance of an officer at Mrs. Mansfield's residence, in Lower Grosvenor-street. Gray immediately obeyed the summons,

and, being ushered into the dressing-room of the lady of the house, was informed of the reason that had led to the request for the assistance of the police. Mrs. Mansfield lived in sumptuous style, and was noted for the splendour of her dinner parties. A large stock of valuable plate, worth about £1,000, was in the care of the chief butler. A state dinner was to be given to a select party of fashionables, and the butler received orders to get the plate ready for the banquet.

The butler, having received his directions, went to the plate-room, which, of course, was under his charge; but, as he did not make his appearance during the day, Mrs. Mansfield was informed of the fact by the under-butler, and the result was a visit to the plate-room. The butler was not there. The packages and chests in which the plate was stored were then examined, the discovery was made that the packages were "dummies," and that the whole of the plate, consisting of costly Epergnes candlesticks, dishes, plates, spoons, and tea and coffee services, had been carried off, and pieces of wood, carefully covered up to resemble the articles, left as their representatives. It was now perfectly clear that the butler had absconded, having previously made away with, or carried off, all the valuable property entrusted to his charge, leaving nothing but a heap of letters, books, and betting cards behind. Gray being furnished with a description of the person of the butler, found it tallied exactly with that of the "Country Squire" who had figured so conspicuously in the betting ring, and who had so cleverly "nobbled" the knowing ones.

Gray, being satisfied that he had a clue, though a faint one, to the hiding place of the butler, whose name was William Brown, set about his inquiries. His first visit was to the pawnbrokers. In the hands of three of them—Mr. Rochford, Mr. Stevens, and Mr. Vincent—nearly all the missing plate was found. The case of the last-named pawnbroker was a peculiarly hard one. He had only recently commenced business, and had been favoured by Brown with stolen plate to the value of about £280. The pawnbrokers were not in the least to blame. They had been taken in most adroitly, all suspicion being disarmed by the mode adopted to pledge the plate. A gentleman, in a handsome brougham, attended by a groom, drove up to the different pawnbrokers, and, as a matter of course, succeeded in raising money, without difficulty, on the parcels of plate he brought from time to time. The two persons were the butler, and the pretended groom. The pawnbrokers were thus thrown off their guard, and lent money on the costly property without suspicion.

Gray, having made this discovery, went back to Lower Grosvenor-street, and imparted the result of his investigation. He was then informed that Brown had taken the place of butler, on a written character from his late master, General Smith, of the Marine Parade, Brighton. As soon as the character was handed to the detective, he recognized the writing at once as that of a notorious begging-letter impostor, who provided fictitious characters for servants, to enable them to obtain places in good families.

As a matter of form, inquiries were made at the Marine Parade, but no General Smith was known there. Gray now set about in earnest to trace out the fugitive. Having ascertained that the pretended groom was a young man named Burbage, whose father kept a coffee-shop in Hart's-court, he proceeded to the locality, and kept a strict watch on the house. While on the watch, disguised as a porter, in shirt sleeves, paper cap, and apron, he saw Burbage come out of the coffee-shop; he followed him to Howland-street, and saw him enter one of the houses. He sat down on the steps of the door, and waited there several hours, until Burbage came out alone. When Burbage got out of sight, Gray knocked at the door, and, on seeing the landlord, asked him if he had any lodgers.

"Only one," said the landlord; "he lives at the top of the house, has only been here a few days, and talks of going away to-night. The young man who just left has been on a visit to him."

Gray, having been told which room the lodger occupied, walked up stairs, and opened the door. Seated at a table, with a glass of grog before him, was the quondam Squire—the real Butler Brown.

"Ah, Gray, my boy," said the Squire, who recognized the officer immediately, "It's all right; I'm glad you've come. I was just going to give myself up."

"I suppose so," said Gray, drily, "but I'll save you the trouble. I've a cab below, so we'll first pay a short visit to Grosvenor-street, and then I'll introduce you to Vine-street Station-house."

"Here," said the butler, "here's a letter to prove what I have said. I intended to have sent it to my lady last night."

Gray took the letter, and read it. The composition was evidently not that of the butler. It was written with great eloquence, and contained a strong appeal to the better feelings of his injured mistress.

Gray took his prisoner to Lower Grosvenor-street. In the hall they were met by Mrs. Mansfield. The prisoner immediately threw himself on his knees, and cried out,—

"Oh! Madam, pause before you give me into custody. If you expect mercy in another world, shew it to me in this."

"I have nothing to do with the matter," replied Mrs. Mansfield; "it is now in the hands of the police. Your conduct has been very bad. The police will do their duty, and I will do mine in prosecuting you."

"Come," said Gray to the prisoner, "you hear what the lady says; get up and go with me."

"Well," said the prisoner, "there's nothing but transportation, I suppose, for me; but it's all come of that cursed betting; the betting men are a set of thieves. I never made five pounds by betting; but somehow I was drawn into it, and couldn't resist, and this is the upshot."

Gray took his prisoner to Vine-street, and booked the charge. The prisoner was fully committed on the clearest evidence, and, when tried, was convicted, and sentenced to transportation.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE HAWSTEAD HALL BURGLARY.

"It does not appear to be such personally dangerous work, that of taking fellows into custody for capital felonies, as it used to be," was the remark I made to Goddard one evening, when we were assembled in the "Marlborough Head" snuggery, chatting over old times.

"They don't hang quite so much as they used to do," replied Goddard, "so it is hardly worth while to resist. Besides, a chap pretty well knows it's of no use, for if he gets away to-day he will be grabbed to-morrow, and resistance to an officer is sure to increase the punishment after conviction. The stiffest job I had in my time, and I've had some pretty stiff ones, was taking Dick Poacher, for the Hawstead Hall job."

"Ah!" said Schofield, "I was in that. Didn't the sweat run off both of us like peas! While you were tackling Dick, I was keeping off the navvies with my pistols."

"Tell the particulars," said I, "and don't be bashful in speaking of your own prowess, for I have heard you were nothing but a 'good one' to go in whenever a little rough and tumble business was to be done."

"Well, its rather a long yarn, and a long time ago, but what I forget old Scho. will recollect. The rummest part of the business was the way the case turned up. It was a country job, and only came to us by the

queerest accident. Let's see; I had some business in Scotland, about which I will tell you another time, and on my way home I went to Aberdeen to see a relation of mine. When I got to Aberdeen I was told of a clever robbery which had just taken place, and informed that the foreigner who committed it had got clean off with the 'swag,' which was worth £400. The way he went to work was not unlike the Rundell and Bridge great diamond job, and I should say the Spaniard who did it 'took the idea' from that business. My relative having put me on to this job, I learned that this was the way it was done:—

"The Spaniard called at Thomson's, one of the leading watchmakers and jewellers in the city, and stating that he was about to ship a quantity of English watches and jewellery to the continent, requested to look over the stock to see if anything would suit. The shopkeeper had a very large stock. The foreigner was, no doubt, wide awake about that, and when the gold watches, chains, and diamond rings were pulled out, the foreign merchant found them so very much to his liking, that he promised to call in a day or two and make a selection. One morning the foreigner, who had evidently watched the shopkeeper out, again made his appearance, and telling the shopman he had come to make his purchases, looked out gold watches and jewellery to the value of upwards of £400. He ordered an invoice to be made out at once, and was very particular about having the goods properly described, so that, as he said, there should be no difficulty with the duty at the foreign

Custom-house. The invoice was presented to him; he produced what appeared to be a huge roll of bank-notes, and paid down £40 as a deposit, stating that he would hand over the balance in the evening, when the goods were brought to him at his hotel. The foreigner then pulled out of his pocket a pasteboard box, and requested the shopman to pack the valuables in it. The shopman did as requested. The foreigner then asked him to tie it round with some red tape, which he also took from his pocket. The civil shopman complied.

"'Now,' said the Spaniard, 'to make sartain dat nopody sal open de box, I vil put von littel seal on de tape.'

"The shopman went to the back shop for a light, and returning with it, he placed seals on various portions of the tape, not forgetting, at the solicitation of his customer, to put on plenty of wax. The foreigner was very particular in his directions for the goods not to be sent until eight o'clock to the hotel, as he was going, he said, round the city to make other purchases, and it was uncertain about his reaching his hotel before the evening. The foreigner went away, and soon afterwards the shopkeeper entered, and was informed by his shopman of the excellent order he had just executed, on which a deposit of £40 had been paid, with the certainty of a check for £360 in the evening. The shopkeeper, who was quite as much pleased as his shopman, undertook himself to see the goods safely delivered into the hands of such a capital ready-money customer. At eight o'clock he was punctually at the hotel, but, to his

great surprise, learned that no one of the name given to his shopman was there, and that no foreigner had visited at the hotel for months past.

"The shopkeeper at first conjectured that his shopman had misunderstood the name of the hotel; but a suspicion flashing all at once across his mind, he tore off the tape, opened the box, and found a valuable collection of flint-stones wrapped up carefully in cotton wool. Frantic at his loss and the stale nature of the deception, he rushed back to his shop, and made the robbery known.

"It was clear how the robbery had been effected. The foreigner had prepared two boxes, exactly similar in outward appearance. He had contrived in the way mentioned to induce the shopman to leave the front shop for a moment, in order to get a light to ignite the sealing-wax, and during that momentary absence had made the exchange of the boxes. The foreigner had also gained a start of ten hours by his plan of not having the box sent to the hotel before eight o'clock in the evening; therefore, immediate pursuit was hopeless.

"The shopkeeper asked me what he had better do. I told him to keep cool and quiet about the business, and I would see if I could not manage to get upon some trace of the property. The shopkeeper put the job in my hands, and as I felt pretty sure the foreigner would make his way to London—and the property too—I took care when I came home to have handbills printed and privately circulated among the jewellers, pawn-

brokers, fences, and other parties who would be likely to be customers for these kind of valuables. I heard nothing about the business for some months, until a little affair took me in the city. I will just state what that little affair was, because it will serve to show how one thing sometimes leads to another. Madame Vestris, and her particular friend, 'Handsome Jack,' came to the office to give this information, that on the previous evening her footman had taken a purse from the carriage, containing £20 in £5 bank-notes, and had absconded with it. When the name of the footman was stated, I recollected something about him which induced me to believe he would most likely be found in the neighbourhood of Farringdon-market, or rather, the place where the market now is. I went, accordingly, to make some inquiries in that direction, and when there, it crossed my mind to ask at a pawnbroker's shop hard by where all the swell thieves took their plunder, whether anything had turned up about the Aberdeen job. I saw the pawnbroker, and told him what I came about. He appeared struck with an idea, and calling to one of his assistants, he asked a few questions, and then inquired if I had a bill with a description of the stolen property about me. I produced one, and on looking over his books he found that a good many of the watches were in his possession, and that the person who had pledged them months ago—thinking, no doubt, pursuit had blown over—had, the day before, called to give notice that he would take the whole of the property out of pledge the following day. Sure enough the foreigner

did come according to promise, and his astonishment was very great when he found himself in custody on a charge of felony, after having remained quite unmolested for three or four months. I need not say anything more about this job further than that I afterwards took him down to Aberdeen, and got him identified and convicted. The best part of the business was that I succeeded in getting back £200 or £300 worth of the property. However, I must now go back to my Vestris business.

"I went to the market tap, and there was my man in the very act of changing one of the stolen £5 notes. While I was securing him, a big coarse fellow, in a countryman's dress, came up to me.

"'You be a constable, eh?' said he in broad Summersetshire.

"'What is it, friend?' said I.

"'Mebbee, I could put ee up to zummut a darned zight better than that there little job you been about, if you'd zay as you'd act anyways like a mon.'

"'I'll act like a man to any one that acts like a man to me; that's all I can say.'

"'Well, I can put ee on a hundred pun job. Here,' said he, pulling out one of the handbills offering £100 reward for the apprehension of the ruffians concerned in a most daring burglary committed at Hawstead Hall, near Tattersall. 'Dick Poacher was the head of the gang, and I know,' said he, 'whereabout Dick Poacher works, and he's the last on 'em that ain't scragged.'

"'Well,' I said, 'meet me at Marlborough-street Police-court this evening, and we'll talk over the business; but I must first lock up my man, and then I'll be ready for you.'

"In the evening," resumed Goddard, "I got back to the court, and there I found my navvy walking up and down the street, swearing and ranting to himself like a madman. I was told by Schofield that he had come straight from the public-house where I met with him to the court, and had made out such a story that it led to his introduction to Mr. Dyer, the magistrate, to whom he repeated his tale. The affair, which many people yet living will recollect, was this.

"A gang of men, with faces blackened, one night suddenly presented themselves at Hawstead Hall, near Tattersall, the residence of the Rev. Mr. Elsey, and having first tied up the men-servants in the stables, broke into the house, and pitching the young ladies and female domestics into the cellars, proceeded to ransack the rooms, one of the burglars, pistol in hand, keeping guard over the lady and gentleman, and compelling them to point out where the money and valuables were kept. The burglars completely gutted the place, and after securing the plunder, leisurely regaled themselves with the contents of the larder and wine-cellar until break of day, when they went off. They had the start of all pursuit by many hours, because everybody belonging to the Hall was gagged and otherwise secured, so that no one could give an alarm, the situation of the family being only discovered by some one calling at

the Hall in the course of the day and finding out the state of the matters. The burglars had carried off property, in money, jewellery, and plate, estimated to be worth £400 or £500.

"Of course such a daring business created an immense sensation throughout the kingdom. The country constables were called into consultation; magistrates came forward to investigate; and rewards were immediately offered by government for the capture of the burglars, or for information likely to lead to their identification. The only description and particulars that the frightened inmates could give were, that there were four men; that they were unusually tall and strong, and rough in speech; that they did not speak the dialect of the county; and that one of them was very much knock-kneed. Following up this scanty clue, the constables managed to find out that four men answering the description of the four burglars had been at various beer-shops on the road to the Hall, a few miles away, drinking, smoking, and quarrelling, on the day before the robbery. This was the clue that ultimately led to the capture of two of them. The beer-shop keepers in several instances had kept an eye on these rough customers, and in course of conversation got out of them that they were 'bankers' in search of a job: that they had been at work on one of the West of England canals, and that they were going northwards, to look for employment. The landlady of the 'Harp' beer-shop, which was not above five miles from the Hall, was so satisfied that the four men were about no good,

that she took particular notice of their faces and general appearance. She was able, therefore, to give such a minute description as to place two constable very soon on the track of the gang, and in a day or two they picked up a couple of them, who were immediately identified by the landlady, and, as far as possible, sworn to by the terrified inmates at the Hall.

"But what led to the establishment of their complete connection with the burglary was the finding on one of them part of a tradesman's account, which had been taken from the mantelpiece in the library, and used by the fellow to light his pipe. Instead of throwing away the remnant of the paper, he had thrust it into his pocket, no doubt to serve for another pipe-light, and this scrap being produced in evidence materially helped to hang him. The other was also convicted in a somewhat similar way: a silver spoon, with Mr. Elsey's initials, was found in his hat. The fellow had used it while regaling at the Hall to stir his grog with, and instead of putting it, as an *honourable* thief was bound to do, with the rest of the 'swag,' to be shared in common, he had shoved it under the lining of his hat, intending, no doubt, when the opportunity offered, to sell it, and sack the money. The names by which the two men were familiarly known were Timothy Tom and Bill Brimmer. They were convicted and hanged. No tidings of the other two could be obtained for more than a year, although it was well known they were working on different canals and railways in the midland counties, and £100 reward offered for their apprehen-

sion, with a conditional pardon if one of them gave such evidence against the other as would lead to a conviction."

"But," said I, "how could it possibly happen that these two men were allowed to go about without being taken into custody, when their place of working was known?"

"The navvies and bankers are a rough set, and stick to one another like bricks," said Goddard; "no officer or constable dared to show his face among them, and no magistrate could have induced a country constable, or even half-a-dozen constables, to execute a warrant; for though the officers might succeed in taking their man, they would be marked for ever, and waylaid where they could not get help or defend themselves. Well, I went over the way to my man, and after a little coaxing, I brought him back to the court, and persuaded him to make such a deposition as would justify the magistrate in issuing his warrant. I found my navvy, whose name was Joe Beales, to be a regular, uncultivated savage. With a great deal of difficulty I got him to come to terms; that is, he was to take Scho. and myself to the place where Dick Poacher worked; he was to point out Dick by a sign previously agreed upon; and then, if we succeeded in taking him, and lodging him in gaol, he was to have half the reward; if Dick escaped, he was to have a £5 note only, and as many 'drunks' as he could screw out of us on the road.

"We got him on the Northampton coach that

night, and kept him pretty quiet by letting him have ale and rum whenever the coach stopped to change horses. The quantity he put away was something astonishing, and yet we could not make him dead drunk, as we wished. We stopped at Bedford for the night. I must tell you that Scho. and myself were both armed with a brace of pistols, and we did not forget to let Joe Beales know it. We got a lodging at an inn, and told the landlord to let Joe have as much ale as he could stow away, thinking that would keep him quiet until morning.

"This fellow was one of the most original chaps I ever came across; he could do more tricks than anyone I ever knew—one, in particular, would make you die with laughing; it was what he called 'unscrewing his nose.' He would lay hold of his long nose and twist it round, grinding his teeth all the while in a comical way, so as to make it really appear as if he was actually unscrewing his nose.

"We got him to bed at last, and thought we were comfortable till morning, but in the night we were roused by a terrible row in his room, which was double-bedded. It turned out that a master sweep and his man occupied the second bed, and in the night Joe and the sweep began wrestling for a wager. Joe tackled the sweep, and at last the wrestle got to a fight, when the journeyman, seeing his master getting the worst of it, pitched into Joe, and a regular Lancashire scrimmage took place. We rushed into the room with our pistols; the landlord came out in his shirt, and seeing how we

were armed, mistook us for highwaymen, and sent off to the barracks for the soldiers. In a few minutes we found ourselves under arrest, but an explanation with the officer put matters right, and at last we managed to get the savage to bed again. In the morning our man turned sulky; he would have nothing but rum, and we let him have enough, as we thought, but the liquor only made him obstinate and quarrelsome.

"By the time we had got within a mile or two of Newbold, where the bankers, and Dick Poacher among them, worked, Joe flatly refused to go a step further unless the money was first paid over to him. I reasoned, but to no purpose. Schofield held the muzzle of a pistol to his head, and swore he would blow his brains out if he did not keep to his bargain. Nothing, however, would do; the fellow was neither to be frightened nor pacified. At last I told Schofield we would give up the job and go back. Schofield would not consent, and luckily thought of a plan that brought Joe to his senses. Schofield threatened to go on to Newbold to split on Joe Beales, and leave him to be dealt with by his mates when he found his way back again among them. This frightened the fellow effectually, for he well knew that he would never be allowed to work among any of the gang again, and that his life would not be worth a pea-shell as soon as his intention to betray a comrade was blown.

"Joe, after some rough parleying, agreed to proceed, and it was, at last, arranged that he should go into the inn where the bankers stopped to liquor after

knocking off work, and that when Dick Poacher made his appearance, he was to call for a pot of ale and ask him to drink. This was to be the signal. I was to place myself where I could see all the movements of Joe, and, at the same time, to get sight of Dick Poacher, so that I might know him again when the chance occurred of taking him into custody. I was disguised in a smock and billy-cock hat like a country pedlar. Schofield kept watch, pistol in hand, at a convenient distance. We got to the inn, and Joe sat down in the tap.

"Before, however, proceeding to the inn, we had persuaded a couple of fighting men, for a sovereign a piece, to lend us a hand, and we took care to have a post-chaise waiting at the bottom of a hill at the end of a lane, through which Dick Poacher was expected to pass after leaving the inn. Here we placed a number of county constables; they refused to give any help themselves in taking the fellow, and would only consent to act when we got him out of the lane. Well, everything at last was settled; Schofield watching at a distance, and I sitting in the tap, just where I could have a full view of everything that passed. I could perceive that Joe was arguing the matter over with himself; I was resolved, however, if he gave the 'office' to the bankers, I would shoot him there and then, as I was pretty sure the bankers would never let us off alive if once they got wind of our business. After waiting for about half an hour, Joe suddenly called for a mug of ale, and handing it over to one of the bankers, said:—

"'Hullo, Dick, my boy! take a drink.'

"An immensely powerful fellow, knock-kneed, took the mug and drank. I knew at once, from the hand-bill, this was our man. In a short time the bankers began to move off, Dick Poacher the last. Dick, however, did not take the lane, as we expected, but went down a bye road, which luckily led to where the post-chaise was stationed. I went after him, followed by Schofield and the two fighting men. Dick Poacher turned round, and seeing us following him, stopped, and taking the pickaxe from his shoulder, raised it in a menacing manner.

"'Keep off,' he roared, 'or I'll brain both on ye.'

"'Don't be a fool, Dick,' says I; 'you're only "wanted" about a "kid" you havn't paid for.'

"'It's a dom'd lee,' said he. 'You're from Lunnon, and that accounts for Dick Poacher being hereabouts. Halloo, mates!' raising his voice and beckoning to his comrades.

"Schofield sprang forward with a pistol in each hand.

"'Drop that pickaxe,' said he, 'or, by G—, I'll shoot you.'

"I rushed on Dick and pinned one of his arms, the two pugilists pinned the other. Dick was as strong as a bullock, and resisted like a madman, roaring to his comrades to help him. The bankers were not out of hearing; they came rushing towards us, armed with picks and shovels. Schofield kept them at bay with his pistols, swearing hard and fast that he would blow out the brains of the first man that attempted to pass him. The bankers were daunted for the moment, but several

of them ran round the hedge to take us in the rear. We kept dragging Dick down the lane, he kicking us with his heavy boots, and plunging about like a wild beast. Just as the first batch of bankers got to the hedge, and were about to jump over, we came within sight of the post-chaise; we called to the post-boy to drive towards us; he did so, and by main strength we forced Dick Poacher in, and shut the door, having first succeeded in getting on the handcuffs. I jumped on the box, Schofield on the roof, and the post-chaise galloped off. We had some ugly knocks with stones that were flung after us, and Schofield nearly tumbled off when the chaise started; but we got away safely with our man, and lodged him in Lincoln Gaol. As we went in we passed through the strong room, in which were the plaster casts of Timothy Tom and Bob Brummer, who had both been hanged for the same job; when the busts caught the eye of Dick Poacher, he dropped his head, and walked on as tame as a lamb."

"I suppose he was hanged like the rest," said I.

"No; he was only transported for life. Perhaps the prosecutor did not wish to make the case too heavy against him, and this saved his life. It was, however, one of the roughest pieces of work I ever went through, and I didn't much care for another job of the same sort, for though we got the reward, there was so many in it, that it quite took the gold off the gingerbread."

CHAPTER XXX.

A LESSON TO MEDDLERS.

One evening, at the "Marlborough Head," the conversation among the officers of the court turned upon the difficulties they so frequently met with—when in the execution of their duty taking into custody, perhaps, a troublesome beggar, a foul-mouthed prostitute, a well-known thief, a drunken ruffian, or, in short, dealing with any street nuisance which their very vocation as constables required them to abate or remove—from the improper and injudicious interference of the mob, often the confederates of the thief or prostitute in custody, and sometimes of well-meaning persons, who could see nothing but what, in their opinion, was an exhibition of unnecessary force exerted to lodge the offender in the lock-up house, and hear nothing but the loud protestations of innocence and exclamations against the cruelty and violence to which they—the culprits—were subjected. It may be safely taken as a rule, that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, the officer, constable, street-keeper, or policeman, is right; that he ought to receive assistance from standers-by, or, at least, if active assistance is not given, that he ought to be allowed to effect his capture without insult or obstruction. In the hundredth case—assuming that a constable displays needless violence or insolence in discharge of what he conceives to be his duty—should he, in fact, be wholly unfit for his post, and show by his conduct incontestably

that he is so—even then I do not mean to say that the mob ought to interfere, either in the way of obstructing or ill-using the officer. The redress for misconduct on the part of a constable—I am speaking now with reference to the police—is so easy and prompt that no one can be justified in taking his own view of what is right, and doing his own justice on assumed official offenders. A complaint properly laid, either before the Scotland Yard Commissioners or a magistrate, against any constable, is sure to be investigated, and if established, the constable is speedily deprived of all chance of repeating his misconduct by dismissal from the force. But there is a somewhat general and very unfounded prejudice against the police in the public mind. I have heard people, in a decent station of life who ought to have known better, condemn in unmeasured language the whole body of the constabulary, the general behaviour of constables, and the system that was assumed to screen their arbitrary and illegal proceedings. No greater mistake can prevail than this. As a body, the police are the best conducted civil force in the world. They are insufficiently paid; their emoluments bear no just proportion to their onerous duties and responsibilities, and frequently they are subjected to shameful personal maltreatment, from popular prejudices against them, and from the foolish disposition of meddlers rather to give assistance to the breakers of the public peace than to those who are its appointed and paid guardians.

It would form a frightful and lengthy list, if the

names were given of all the constables who, since the establishment of the force, have been killed outright by brutal violence committed on them in the public streets —kicked, beaten, jumped upon, eyes literally smashed in their heads, teeth knocked out, limbs broken, and miserably maimed in the prime of life by that species of cowardly and savage mode of kicking practised most commonly in what are called the "Irish districts." I say the list would shock and startle the public were it given to them, and the details and results of the injuries fairly and intelligibly set forth. I have often expressed my astonishment to the acting inspectors when I have seen a well-conducted constable with every feature beaten out of human proportions by some well-known ruffian and his "palls," that the constable did not protect himself with his truncheon.

"If he had," the inspector would reply, "why then the next morning some of the papers would be full of the 'brutal conduct of police constables.' The editors of these papers would have long articles on the 'brutality and inefficiency of the force in general,' and an outcry would be raised calling upon the commissioner to dismiss the particular 'brute' who, to save his life, had knocked down a rough with his truncheon; the result of which would be that the poor fellow who did less than what every one of these eloquent writers would have done if attacked in the same way, would receive dismissal from the force without pension or character; perhaps himself, and wife, and children exposed to destitution for the remainder of

their days. No; it is always best for constables to allow themselves to be three parts murdered rather than to use their truncheons."

Now, mind, I am no advocate for either the needless exhibition, and certainly not the needless use of the truncheon; but I do say, if it were used in a protective sense in some of the well-known districts ten times oftener than it is, it would not be more than constables were entitled to do in fair self-defence. I do not say the constables are always right, or civil, or forbearing; I know instances to the contrary: but what I do repeat —and my remark is founded on thirty years' personal observation—is that, as a body, they are well-conducted, desirous of doing their duty to the best of their ability, and that in ninety-nine out of every hundred street cases they are right, ought to have prompt assistance, when needed, from the public, and in no case ought to be obstructed.

I will now go back to the conversation at the "Marlborough Head," which occurred about the time when the new police were established, and when the old police were only in process of being abolished.

"I do not remember ever having received any assistance from bystanders, when I've had to take into custody a troublesome customer," said Clements, an officer known for his determined but temperate conduct in the discharge of his duty. "I have had frequently to fight against odds to take my man, and have generally found the mob against me."

"The mob's always more ready to take the part of

a thief or a murderer than an officer with a warrant to apprehend him," said Avis. "I havn't a limb about me that hasn't been bruised or broken just because I couldn't get people standing by to help while I was taking a cove into custody."

"What I most disliked," said Ballard, "was the interference of your clever 'gentleman,' who knew nothing about the merits of the case, had not seen the commencement, and only came up, perhaps, just at the moment when, after a hard tussle and some serious injuries, an officer had succeeded in overcoming resistance."

"I have often had such 'gents' interfere, but they were never right in any one case that I could make out," said Clements.

"I'll tell you an instance that happened to me, which helped to give a lesson to one of this kind of meddling gentry that did no harm to him or me either. You all recollect 'Cauliflower,' the black crossing-sweeper. Well, I needn't tell you that a greater savage was not to be found in London than this man. He would never stick to any crossing in particular, but would go about from crossing to crossing—perhaps one day in Piccadilly, another in Regent-street, a third in Oxford-street; wherever he saw a tidy business doing, he would drive away the regular sweeper, and take his place. It was of no use for the poor sweepers to kick at this: if they showed fight, he would knock them down with his broom, and if people interfered, he would serve them the same, or rush at them, and bite away at them like

a wild beast. He was the terror of the west-end crossing-sweepers, and the disgrace of the west end of the town.

"One day I was with Muggeridge, the St. James's beadle, who had on his gold-laced parochial robes and cocked hat, when we saw a number of people rushing along in a state of terror. In a moment afterwards Cauliflower made his appearance, running amuck at everybody, knocking them down with fist and broom, and biting wherever he got a chance. Two people had been so badly injured that they were obliged to be carried off to the Middlesex Hospital. I saw what was the matter in a moment, and crossing over suddenly, I met Cauliflower full butt, as he came foaming along, and downed him like a sack. I knew there was no time to be lost, for he was one of the most powerful men ever tackled, and, therefore, when he was floored, I threw myself upon him and tightened his cravat until his tongue began to show between his teeth. The mob was on my side up to this point. Thinking I had quieted Cauliflower for a time, I got up, and called Muggeridge to lend a hand. But Cauliflower was only shamming; he no sooner felt himself at liberty than he jumped up and flung himself on Muggeridge, fastening his teeth in his shoulder, just for all the world as a wolf would do. I choked Cauliflower off, and having dropped his head, not very softly, once or twice on the kerb, Cauliflower, finding he was mastered, gave in. We took him along, four of us, one at each arm and leg, turning him over, face downwards—the only way to

carry a restive man—and when he began to kick, which he did most furiously every now and then, we let him drop on his face in the mud, making his nose even flatter than it was by nature. Well, you may think that by this time old Cauliflower looked a very pretty figure, what with the blood and the mud. We got, in this way, to Poland-street, and were just turning into Great Marlborough-street when Cauliflower, by a tremendous kick, sent Muggeridge, cocked hat and all, flying into the middle of the street, and by another effort got his other leg free, kicking about like a brewer's horse. I was obliged to tighten his cravat again, otherwise the savage would have soon been loose, and doing mischief; and while the struggle was going on up came a well-dressed gentleman—I knew him in a moment as Mr. Phillips, one of the home secretaries.

"'What does all this scandalous violence mean?' he said, with a very grand air; 'it cannot be necessary, I am certain.'

"'Pray, Sir, don't interfere with us,' I said; 'we are officers, and are taking a man who has nearly killed two persons.'

"'You officers—I am surprised you don't know your duty better—you are using more than necessary violence,' said Mr. Phillips; 'I insist on your conducting yourselves with more humanity.'

"'Oh, kind good gentlemans,' said Blackey, who was as artful as a fox, 'don't let 'em kill poor blackey man, wot got no friends.'

"'You shall not want a friend if you will behave

quietly,' says the good gentlemans. 'I'll see that you are not ill-used.'

"'Bless you, good gentlemans. I'll go anywhere with you, if you only be kind to poor blackman, and keep dem ruffens from choken on him.'

"'There,' said Mr. Phillips, turning round to me, 'you see what a little kindness and persuasion will do; the poor man only resisted because he was shamefully used. You constables never know when to act with discretion. It's all brute force with you, when a little judgment and temper would effect all you want. Treat him as a brute, you make a brute of him; treat him as a man, and he will act as a man. I will answer for this poor man's peaceable conduct if you will leave him to my care.'

"'I'll go anywhere like lamb wid dis good gentlemans,' said Blackey.

"'Well, Sir,' said I to Mr. Phillips, not unwilling to let him have a lesson he did not much expect, 'if you'll take the responsibility on yourself, I will give up my prisoner to you.'

"'I take the responsibility cheerfully,' said he. 'I feel certain fair words and gentle treatment are all that are required to overcome resistance to the law of the greatest ruffian.'

"I signed to Muggeridge to keep back, and I allowed the pair to walk on ahead about twenty yards. I could hear Cauliflower spinning a long yarn about the rough treatment he had received, and that Mr. Phillips was sympathising with him. I felt sure, however, that Cauliflower meant mischief, for I saw him casting, now

and then, a sly look backward to see if we were following. I crossed over the way, and then Cauliflower, not seeing me when he gave another look—thinking, no doubt, that we had gone forward and left him alone with his companion—suddenly turned on Mr. Phillips, seized him by the throat, and threw him on his back in a mess of mud that was just ready to be carried away by the scavengers. The savage was about to fling himself on his prostrate victim—who, in terror and pain, shrieked loudly for assistance—and was in the act of stooping his head to bite, when I rushed over and knocked the sense out of him with a blow of my staff. Having secured him with a pair of handcuffs, I proceeded to help up Mr. Phillips, who was in a ludicrous plight, covered with mud from head to foot, and with a badly bruised eye. The officers and the magistrates, who knew him at once, were very much astonished at the figure he cut, and were profuse in their offers of sympathy.

"'I will not accept your kindness,' said he, 'until I have publicly done an act of justice in commending your officer, Clements, and in exposing my own folly. I consider myself rightly served for having attempted to teach men their duty who knew it far better than I did, and I only wish the lesson I have had this day, which will last me for life, could be given to other meddlers who presume to interfere with constables when in the execution of their duty.'

"Mr. Phillips then thanked me for the prompt help I had given to him, and begged my pardon publicly for

interfering. I was pleased at the adventure, for it made me a favourite at the Home-office, very much to my profit, because many a well-paid job was afterwards put in my way."

CHAPTER XXXI.

A BATCH OF NOTABILITIES.

A Bank parcel robbery, involving a large amount of property, having been committed, suspicion pointed at the well-known "Bill Cauty," one of the most remarkable and successful members of the real "swell mob" of that day. Clements having been employed, among other officers, to trace the parcel, I persuaded him to let me make one in his visit to a well-known house in the vicinity of Leicester-square, then the favourite and particular resort of these loose gentry. There was a five-o'clock ordinary, but no one was admitted except members or visitors introduced by a member. Certain police officers, however, were free of the club, and generally all claimed a professional right of *entrée*. At five o'clock, according, I went with Clements to the house, and was admitted to the table d'hote, which was laid out in a handsome room at the back of the premises, without creating any open manifestation of surprise or comment.

The company, apparently of the superior class, was of a miscellaneous sort, as I afterwards learned, nearly all well-known characters—the greater number having been, at one time or another, in contact with the police

more close than agreeable. Clements, on making his appearance, was received with apparent heartiness by most of the company present, but there was evidently, at first, an appearance of restraint on the part of several who, no doubt, had good and sufficient reason for their anxiety, which restraint, however, wore off as the wine circulated. Next to Clements was seated a well-dressed, very good-looking young fellow, who seemed to be on a more than usually friendly footing with the officer. After the dinner was over, this young gentleman insisted on treating his friend Clements and his friend's friend to a bottle of sherry, and we accordingly adjourned to a distant table, where we spent a very pleasant hour. The young fellow appeared to possess very remarkable conversational powers; he was well posted up in all the events of the day, and full of amusing anecdote and general information. His manners were unexceptionable, and he was altogether what might be considered excellent company. Clements having made certain private inquiries, the object which had taken him to the house, of a bejewelled personage of Israelitish physiognomy, rose to go. I took a particularly cordial leave of my new acquaintance, and pressed him to name an evening when I could have the pleasure of returning his friendly bottle. The young fellow looked at Clements and laughed, at the same time politely declined to fix either time or place for another meeting—his engagements, he asserted, prevented him from naming particular time or place, and "special" appointments (said with marked emphasis) were what he always avoided.

When we left the house I asked Clements who his pleasant friend was.

"Who? why nobby Fred King, as he is called, the 'swell cracksman.'"

I looked unpleasantly astonished at this piece of information, recollecting that I had been in such amicable juxtaposition with him the best part of the evening—a fact that could hardly have escaped the notice of the company, all of whom very probably knew Fred King's antecedents quite as well as the officer.

"Don't frighten yourself," said Clements, "about being taken for a swell mobsman or swell crackman's pal; the regular lot there knew that you were not one of themselves, and being with me was quite sufficient to remove the suspicion from you that you were a 'nose.' But, perhaps, you will be more surprised when I tell you that most of those fine gentlemen who were so jolly, and put about the champagne so freely, have had the halter round their necks more than once, and some, as I can answer for, have got it about them yet. The chairman, for instance, who goes by the name of 'Captain,' is the notorious bill-discounter, Richardson. He is at the head of a gang who put advertisements in the newspapers offering to discount bills, and advance money on personal security to any amount. At this very moment he is 'wanted' for getting £1,500 worth of bills from a clergyman who came up from the country in consequence of one of these advertisements, and who was green enough to give the Captain three bills for £500 each, for which he will never get a penny, but

which he will have to pay as sure as you're alive, for the bills will be placed in the hands of what the lawyers call an 'innocent holder,' and if the drawer does not compromise with the gang, why he will be sued for the whole amount, and obliged to 'stump' it up, too."

With this worthy, some years afterwards, I came into more intimate contact, on his making his appearance at the court in custody, on a charge of obtaining two bills of £1,000 each from Louis Napoleon, the present Emperor of France. It appeared in evidence that Louis Napoleon, then in difficulties for want of ready money—he had been a refugee in England for some years—was induced to reply to a money-lending advertisement, and the result of the correspondence was an offer on the part of the pretended discounting society to discount two bills, which Louis Napoleon was directed to prepare and bring on a day named to the office, which, strange to say, was within a few doors of the police-court. The bills were drawn, and his prospective majesty took them himself to the place appointed. His business was soon done. The bills were approved of, and the manager (our acquaintance, the Captain) politely requested to have custody of them, for the inspection of the directors, who were then, he said, sitting in the adjacent board-room, and who would sign the check as soon as the bills were produced. Louis Napoleon was thrown off his guard by the frank manner of the manager and his look of real business, and he gave up the two bills. Having waited for some time, and no manager making his appearance with the check, he rang the bell, and

the housekeeper presented herself. He requested her to inform the directors in the next room that his time was precious, but was astounded at being informed that the rooms had been engaged only for a day; that the person who hired the place had left about an hour ago, and that the "board-room" was nothing more than a bedroom, which gave access to the staircase, down which the bill-stealer had an hour ago unostentatiously conveyed himself. This, however, by way of digression.

"You noticed a cove with handsome diamond ring and studs who spoke with a brogue, didn't you? That was one of the Coyles—another of the gang who has, one way or other, done half the 'fast' noble and simple gentry in the kingdom. There is a charge of conspiracy against him, but the evidence ain't quite ready yet. The quiet gentleman in dark green spectacles goes by the name of Smith. He has been, and is still, in all the large bank robberies. I've had him half-a-dozen times, but never could get a conviction. He keeps his trap and groom, and to my certain knowledge has £6,000 of his own money at this moment in the Bank of England. The man on your right was Charley Lyley, a gaming-housekeeper, in St. James's-square, and next to him sat black-eyed D——, a Jew brothel-keeper, who won a large sum of money one night—they say £20,000—from the Earl of C——. The person I spoke to before I left the place was Ikey Solomons, the 'fence.' I just sounded him about the bank robbery, and hinted that it could be 'squared' for £2,000: but, as it seems four were in it, I don't expect the bank

will get the notes for a penny less than £1,000 for each of them."

"Why," said I, "do you mean to say that the bank will compromise a felony?"

"If they don't, the notes will soon be on the Continent, for Ikey has people in Holland and Paris who manage all this part of the business. The parcel is worth about £25,000, and the bankers won't stick at a few hundreds to get it back."

Clements was right, as it became matter of public notoriety soon afterwards that the bank paid £3,000 for the restoration of their parcel.

"Well, but how is it," said I, "that these men take life so easily, dress so well, and move about in open society, apparently without any fear of justice?"

"All these men are what I call the real 'swell mobsmen'—not mere well-dressed vulgar pickpockets, but the real 'swells.' They don't show until they've 'squared' a charge, and are sure nothing is out against them. Like Bill Cauty—who was not there to-day, for he know's he's wanted, though, as soon as the bank affair is arranged you'll see him at the table, one of the most jovial of the company—when any job has been done they keep "dark" for a time. These fellows live on the fat of the land. They pick up more money in one day by a bit of swindle or a capital felony than you or I could earn honestly in a year, and they live like princes as long as it lasts."

"And how do they get rid of their large gains?" I inquired.

"Why," said Clements, "by the turf, blind hookey, women, and drink."

"One would think," I remarked, "that such characters would shun the light of day."

"Ha! ha!" said Clements, "why they're among the greatest swells in Regent-street and Bond-street—the props of the turf and the hells. Don't go away with the notion that these men think the way they get their money is any disgrace. After a successful "job," if the evidence is too strong they make the money fly—that is, if they are not cleaned out—and the lawyers always find them a way to slip their necks out of the noose. It's only now and then they get into trouble, not one case in fifty can be established against them. They go in for a large stake, the 'victims' are mostly people of station, who are shy at coming forward, and even when they do come forward, the case is pretty sure to break down, as a leading witness is generally found to have been made 'safe' or stalled off. I'll put you up to a few dodges of that sort, and then you'll not be surprised at the way justice is evaded. But we were talking of Fred King. Come with me to the court, and I'll show you the prettiest set of burglar's 'tools' that ever were made."

We went to the court, and Clements opened his locker—each officer having a special cupboard in the ante-room to himself. This locker might be considered a regular cabinet of felonious curiosities. There were sets of handcuffs, each set ticketted with the special services in which it had been called into requisition—jemmies, labelled with the name of the "cracksmen"

from whom they were taken—knives, razors, daggers, pistols—every one of which had thrilling tales of murder and crime attached to them, and small pieces of rope, also carefully docketed with the name of the criminal whose career they had cut short by the agency of the finisher of the law.

"Here," said he, producing a neat leather case; "here is something you will not see every day."

Having opened the case, I proceeded to inspect it. There were a number of highly-polished and very handsomely made articles, of which I could only conjecture the use. They might have passed for a set of surgeon's instruments, they were so neatly finished and peculiar looking.

"This," said Clements, taking out one of the articles, "is a first-rate 'jemmy;' with it you might prise open the strongest door or the best-secured shutter in London. You see it is made fine at one end, and with a short spur to give more purchase. Just insert the thin end into the smallest opening, wait until a hackney-coach comes by, perhaps hired for the job, then give a smart wrench, and the crib is 'cracked.' The rumbling of the hackney—it's a good plan to have one working up and down the street—takes off any noise, and the crib may be cleaned out without waking a mouse. Here are centre-bits. Some, you see, with a worm; others of different gauges, and all of the finest temper. This bottle of oil is used to make 'em work smoothly and noiselessly when inserted in the stock. With this instrument, which you see is hollow to contain

oil, so that it may work smoother and quicker, a good workman would take a piece clean out of an iron-cased door or shutter before you could say Jack Robinson. The three-quarter chisel is for 'fine' work, such as forcing open book-cases, writing-desks, sideboards, jewel-cases, or any fancy bit of furniture where money or valuables are usually kept. Here are lucifer-matches that ignite noiselessly, and a bit of wax candle, all useful in their way; and here's an instrument that I can't exactly tell you what it's use is, but Fred King always brags that he invented this little tool himself."

It was constructed, as was afterwards explained to me, to force open iron safes—not the powerful safes of the present period, but those in common use thirty years ago. The instrument, though small and portable, possessed extraordinary power. A portion was inserted in the keyhole, and then, by means of a screw worked with a circular lever, the lock was by sheer force burst open. The invention did credit to the mechanical genius and ingenuity of the inventor. *Then* it was looked upon as a masterpiece; *now* it is one of the regular tools of the experienced cracksman, though certainly the scientific improvements in safe locks have rendered it nearly useless. Having satisfied my curiosity, I asked Clements to give me the particulars of the way they came into his possession.

CHAPTER XXXII.

FRED KING, THE SWELL CRACKSMAN.

"About four years ago," Clements commenced, "a burglary was committed at a fellmonger's, at Stratford. There were three of 'em in it: one was Fred King. This was about the time when he first started in the 'cracksman' line, and the only case, except one, in which he 'worked' in company. One of the burglars was a discharged servant of the tanner's, who knew all about his master's habits, and, of course, was also well acquainted with the plan of his premises. It was the custom of the owner to clear out his manufactured stock at the end of the year, and to get in a large supply of raw hides for tanning about the same time. The tanner was known on these occasions to keep a large sum of money in the iron safe, to pay for the hides as they were brought in. It was arranged among the gang that Fred King should go down to Stratford in a light cart, pretend that he came to look over the stock to see if anything suited him, make himself acquainted with the premises, and the best way of getting into the counting-house, in which the iron safe, where the cash was deposited, was placed. The other two were to wait at a beershop not far off, and at midnight, when a signal was given, go forward and lend a hand to their comrade.

"The plan agreed upon, as I was afterwards told by Fred, was this:—he was to conceal himself in a shed

where a large quantity of raw hides was stored; this shed being next to the counting-house, to which access from it might be gained without much difficulty. The other two were to have a cart in waiting hard by, and give the signal by throwing something at a small window in the shed, to let Fred know they were there, waiting to be let in.

"Fred told me it was the first bit of hanging business he had ever undertaken, and he felt rather 'shaky,' but he did not let his pals know it. Indeed, it was a very serious business, because then burglary was a sure hanging matter, and it was also well known that the old tanner kept fire-arms ready, that he always went round after dusk to see the place was secured, and that he would not hesitate to shoot any one who was found concealed on the premises.

"Fred told me that he contrived to slip, unperceived, into the shed, and to get under a heap of fresh raw hides, the stink from which nearly choked him. It was a sharp frost, and a bitter cold December night, and he remained crouching in his place of concealment until he was pretty well benumbed. He said he felt precious glad when he heard the old fellow come round, just look into the shed, and then lock it up. But about midnight a large dog, which was let loose after the workmen had gone, began barking and howling furiously; probably the animal heard the two fellows with the cart, or, perhaps, it might have smelt the visitor in the shed. Fred heard the house door open, and the master call to the dog; but the master, not

being satisfied, went round the premises again. In the course of his rounds he came again to the shed, and opened it; upon which the dog rushed in, and renewed his furious barking. Fred thought it was all up with him, for the old gentleman suddenly jumped on the pile of skins under which he was, and shut up the little window above him, which had been left open. Fred said he durstn't stir or venture even to draw a full breath, although the jagged horn on one of the hides went right into his cheek every time the leather merchant trod upon the pile to get the window fastened. At last the window was shut, and the master being apparently satisfied that all was right, called off the dog, but with some difficulty, and locked up the place again.

"Fred went on to say, he heard his 'pals' about an hour afterwards throw dirt at the window, and give a smothered whistle, the signal agreed upon; but his terror was indescribable when he found that he was totally unable to move, or to make the least use of his limbs. The fact was, the cold had paralysed him for the time; however, with a series of desperate efforts, he did contrive to work off the skins, to shake himself free, and to help his comrades into the premises. Once in, the rest was easy. One of them quieted the dog by a bit of 'thieves liver;' the other two got into the counting-house, broke open the safe, and took away about £200 in notes, and £50 or £60 in sovereigns."

"Well, and how were the burglars discovered?" I inquired.

"I traced one of the notes," said Clements, "to

the chap who had been formerly a servant, and, of course, as we say when we don't intend to mention who 'split,' 'from information I received'—I can't say more—I had all three in custody about a week afterwards. The old servant then offered to 'split,' but his master, who had been very kind to him, was so thoroughly savage that he would not allow him to turn king's evidence; so I just got a hint dropped to Fred of what his 'pal' wanted to do, and then Fred, on condition of the case being made 'light' against him, confessed all he knew about it, and got us the notes back. His two pals were hanged, and though he got off the capital charge, he had a twelvemonth for some minor offence. I found these 'tools' at his lodgings, and that's the way I became possessed of them."

Shortly afterwards, a more melancholy *souvenir* in the shape of the rope that hanged Fred King was added to the officer's collection. The way this conviction was brought about contained quite a little romance, and made a great public sensation at the time. The premises of Mr. Newton, a timber merchant, at the east-end of the town, were broken into, and a robbery committed, accompanied by acts of great violence towards the master and the female portion of his family. The thieves not only took all the money and plate they could lay their hands on, but compelled the wife and daughter to give up their watches, rings, ear-rings, and jewellery, which they then wore.

"Mr. Newton," began Lea, who told me the catastrophe, "was one of the most inflexible men I

ever met with. He was like a blood-hound in following up the trail of the burglars. He never lost sight of his determination, night or day, to hang them all. Three of them, one after the other, he traced out. He got up the evidence against them at no end of trouble and an immense expense, and, one after the other, he saw, evidently to his satisfaction, swing at the Old Bailey. The fourth man baffled him for more than two years. At last one morning, to my great surprise, who should I see put to the bar, charged with being one of the gang who broke into Mr. Newton's house, but Fred King. The evidence appeared to me to be weak, but the magistrate, being pressed hard by the counsel, sent the case to a jury. The burglars, it appeared, all wore crape masks, and this rendered identification, by face or feature, difficult. Fred King, when placed at the bar, looked the picture of gentlemanlike innocence. He had engaged Mr. Adolphus as his counsel; against him were Mr. Alley and Mr. Clarkson. The evidence was entirely circumstantial; and though the case evidently made a strong impression on the jury, the counsel for Fred hardly condescended to ask the witnesses a question. When the case was closed, I caught Fred's eye, and he smiled with the greatest confidence.

"I felt pretty sure that he had no doubt the judge would order him to be acquitted, and the more so when Mr. Adolphus got up, and, in a short, snappish address to the jury, told them the only answer he should give to the evidence was to prove an *alibi*. The counsel then told the usher to call Miss Jane

Crawter. A very handsomely dressed young lady was brought into court, and put into the witness-box. She was what you would call a regular 'stunner.' I never saw a finer young creature in my life. She walked up the steps as proud as a peacock. She looked just as if she had stepped out of her carriage, and had always been accustomed to have a footman waiting on her. In fact, she had a rare spice of pride; her father being one of the richest men in Whitechapel. To the surprise of everyone, she avowed, without hesitation or the least appearance of shame, that on the night of the burglary Fred King was with her; that he had come to her father's house, without his knowledge, at ten o'clock; that he remained with her all night, and went away about five in the morning. On cross-examination, she did not deny that she had frequently admitted Fred King's visits clandestinely; that one of the housemaids knew of the intrigue, and that she could bring proof, if further proof were required, that Fred King passed the night, when the burglary was committed, with her.

"Everybody felt astonishment and, at the same time, compassion at the humiliating position of a young lady, the daughter of a most respectable tradesman, who had been highly educated, and whose appearance would have done honour to a nobleman's drawing-room. It was clear that, at the expense of her good name and character, she had come forward to save her lover's life. She was not aware of his true vocation when she first made his acquaintance at a ball at the Freemasons' Tavern. Under a promise of marriage, she had

surrendered her virtue. She had, however, braved all for his sake. She was nothing but a trump, but she hanged him in spite of all her sacrifices.

"I have said that Mr. Alley was particularly sharp in his cross-examination. She stood it without flinching. She never wavered in her statement, and pertinaciously stuck to the date—it all depended on that, which she said she quite well remembered; and further, that being accustomed to keep a diary, she had, on the morning when he quitted her, registered his visit. The diary was called for and immediately produced. The entry was simply, 'Dear Fred came at 11 and left at 5. He gave me a pair of gold ear-rings.' When the ear-rings were read out aloud, I saw Mr. Newton jump up, look at Miss Crawter, and whisper something to the counsel. I also saw Fred give a start, look at the young lady sharply, and then turn as white as a ghost.

"Mr. Alley continued his cross-examination, asking the young lady if the ear-rings she then wore were the ear-rings given to her by the prisoner on the night in question. She answered, unhesitatingly, they were. She was requested to hand them to the counsel for inspection. She did so, and they were immediately given to Mr. Newton, who instantly rose and, addressing the judge, said,

"'My Lord, I am prepared to swear that these ear-rings were forcibly taken from my daughter's ears on the night of the robbery.'

"The young lady turned round, and, catching a

sight of the ghastly countenance of the prisoner, gave one long, loud shriek, and fainted right off. I needn't tell you the court was in a pretty state of confusion for some time. The trial went on, and Mr. Newton's daughter was called to give evidence. She not only swore to the ear-rings, but was able to recollect that she noticed that the man who took them out of her ears had a joint of one of his fingers missing. Fred's left hand was examined, and there, sure enough, was a missing joint. The business, after this, was soon settled; the jury brought in a verdict of guilty, the judge 'black capped' him, and he was hanged the next week."

"What became of the young lady-witness?" said I.

"I did hear," replied Lea, "that a gentleman, who was in court at the time, fell in love with her, and made her an offer; that she married him, and had a large family, who are all now doing well in another part of the world."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

"DETECTIVES'" INGENUITY.

I HAVE already stated my opinion of the superior value of the old police officers when employed on cases of importance, requiring more than common experience, sagacity, and tact. In doing this I must not be supposed to undervalue the new "detective" organization which has superseded the old system. In the progress of these "sketches" I shall endeavour to contrast fairly the merits of the "old police" and the "new detectives," and to show where the old system fell short of the new, and in what respect the new does not come up to the old standard.

Hitherto I have confined my "recollections" to the "old" police. I will now give an instance of the ingenuity which the present "detective" is able to bring to the same kind of police business.

Inspector Whall, of the C division, and Detective-serjeant Gray, of the same division, about fifteen years ago, while at the Saloon, in Piccadilly, were accosted by a person—whose real name, for obvious reasons, I will suppress, but whose cognomen of "Conky" will be a sufficient identification—and whose business I shall only indicate by stating that he made out a very good living by giving information to the police when any great robbery had been committed: information by which a clever constable would be enabled to hit upon the trail of offenders: information sufficiently explicit to afford a

fair chance of recovering the bulk of the property. This latter was the "one thing needful;" the conviction of the culprit was a minor consideration. This person, on a former occasion, when the bank of Messrs. Rogers and Co. was mysteriously robbed of notes and gold to the value of upwards of £100,000, had called on Detective Gray, and had hinted to him that if he went down to Shacklewell, and dug in a particular spot in the garden of a cottage where somewhere about 1,000 sovereigns of the stolen property had been already found, he would light upon "something to his advantage." Gray told me he neglected to take the hint, and the consequence was that another constable, who was "put up" to the hiding-place, went down, searched the spot, found an old kettle buried in the garden, in which a quantity of the stolen notes were secreted, and got the large reward. Having missed such a grand prize, the detective was naturally disposed to pay attention to any further hint that might be dropped from the same quarter.

At the Piccadilly Saloon the individual in question came quietly up, and whispered in his ear,

"I'm hard up! Have you got any money about you?"

"These are hard times," said Gray, "and I can't afford to lend."

"I must have two sovereigns down—the *job* is worth it," said he, significantly.

Gray consulted his inspector, and they agreed to risk the money between them. As soon as the personage in question had pocketed the sovereigns he pointed over

his shoulder in such a way as not to attract the least attention to a couple of well-dressed men, who were drinking champagne at a table in one corner of the saloon.

"Look after those two chaps," said he; "it *will pay;*" and, without adding another word, left the saloon.

Though this was all the information the informer would give, the "detectives" were pretty well convinced it was worth following up. They watched the champagne bibbers unperceived, saw them quit the saloon, and traced them to a gaming-house in Rupert-street. Following up the clue, they ascertained that one of the pair was proprietor of this gaming-house, and that the other was a "bonnet," who had recently been pawning a great number of gold watches. Inquiry was cautiously made by Gray at various pawnbrokers, and the result was, that with three or four west-end pawnbrokers gold watches of first-class character, with a first-class maker's name on them, had been pledged to the extent of about £1,500.

The next step was to ascertain whether any large robbery of watches had been perpetrated; but, though they made complete yet careful inquiries, they could hear of nothing satisfactory. Application had, in the meantime, been made to one of the partners of the firm whose name was on the watches, but they had sustained no robbery, and they gave it as their opinion that the watches were what are termed "duffers"—imitation watches, to take in the pawnbrokers with. This, how-

ever, did not quite satisfy the officers. It was agreed between them that Whall should watch the movements of one, Gray the movements of the other. Three weeks of constant espionage enabled them to ascertain that one of them was named Gamble; that he dined at a public-house kept by a publican named Crofts, in Great Windmill-street, every Friday; that he might be seen coming out of Stamford-street early in the morning, and that when in Fleet-street he usually took an omnibus to the city. Gray, who was my informant, said he had endless trouble to find out who this person really was. He followed his man from omnibus to cab morning after morning, but invariably lost him in the neighbourhood of the Bank. The person he was pursuing apparently took every precaution to elude detection, and, being able to run with great swiftness, as soon as he got out of omnibus or cab in the city he dived down one of the courts in Cornhill, found his way into Finch-lane, and then all trace of him suddenly disappeared. One morning Gray and Whall agreed to keep watch together —one at a public-house in Clement's-lane, the other in Finch-lane. Both were disguised; but Gray's was the most complete. He put on an old smock-frock, thrust a bundle of hay up the neck, giving himself the appearance of being hump-backed, and provided himself with a supply of lucifer-match boxes, as if his business was to sell them. He had not been very long on the look-out before he saw his man coming down Finch-lane at a rattling pace, looking sharply at every one in the street. He fixed his eye for a moment on the dis-

guised constable, but the deception was sufficiently complete to disarm suspicion, and he passed on without exhibiting alarm. Gray followed after, and to his great delight saw him turn quickly into Mr. French's (the watchmaker) shop in Cornhill, hang up his hat, and set about business in a manner to satisfy the constable that he was employed regularly on the premises.

Gray went off instantly to Clement's-lane to acquaint his brother constable of the discovery; but his dirty and ragged appearance so mystified the waiters at the tavern, that they positively refused to admit him, and it was not until he had made himself known that he was permitted to enter the house, and communicate with the inspector. Being now thoroughly satisfied they had got on the right scent, and resolving to proceed with due caution, they went to a solicitor named Tucker, in St. Swithin's-lane, and disclosed the circumstances. The solicitor immediately wrote a note requesting Mr. French to step to his office on business for five minutes. The reply was verbal — that Mr. French was too much engaged to leave the premises, and a request was added to have the nature of the business communicated to him. This, of course, was out of the question, and a second note was despatched, but the same answer was returned.

A third note was then written, in stronger but well-guarded terms, and this had the effect of causing Mr. French to make his appearance at the office. The solicitor then opened the matter by stating that two detectives were in the adjoining room, who wished to

have some conversation with him. Mr. French, according to Gray's statement, gave them an interview, but received them stiffly, and inquired their business.

"Have you a person named Gamble in your employ?" inquired the inspector.

"Certainly," said Mr. French; "he is our foreman."

"And what is your opinion of his honesty?"

"My opinion of his honesty is of the very highest character. I place unbounded confidence in him."

"Perhaps," said Gray, "you may find that your confidence is misplaced—has been abused."

"Oh!" said Mr. French, with an ironical bow, taking up his hat, "if that is the business you have come upon, I am sorry you have given yourself any trouble about it. I wish you a very good morning, gentlemen."

"Stop," said Gray, "very likely you will know your property when you see it. At Rochfort's there are watches pledged of your make worth more than £300, and I will take you to other pawnbrokers where there are more watches, the value of which together, I am informed, is not short of £2,000."

Mr. French appeared astonished and incredulous, but agreed to meet the constables in Leicester-square, and to go with them to inspect the property in the evening. Mr. French drove up in his brougham to Saville House, to keep his appointment, and after visiting the pawnbrokers, became satisfied that an immense system of plunder, of which he was totally unaware, owing to the extent of his valuable stock, had been

going on for a considerable time. Mr. French requested them to take no further steps for a day or two, but the "detectives" took counsel together, and knowing that Gamble's day for dining at Croft's was the following Friday, they resolved to take him into custody, and his companion likewise, on the evidence they had already obtained. About one o'clock Gray looked in at Croft's, but found only a few acquaintances, to whom his absence would evidently have been more welcome than his company. He did not stop long, but went away, keeping sharp watch on the house till about four o'clock, the hour when Gamble usually made his appearance. Having again entered the house, and made his way into the little select parlour where special guests only were received, he found the landlord busy compounding a salad for his expected visitor. The landlord was evidently annoyed at this second visit.

"What's up now?" said he to Gray. "Who do you want? You see you have frightened away all my company; so it's no use waiting here as I shall only see a gentleman from the city, who dines here every Friday."

"Well," said Gray, "I want a word or two with him. Don't you split; just introduce me as your country friend; and if I find he can't give me the information I want, I shall hook it directly."

"I don't think you'll get much out of him," said Crofts; "he's the wrong sort for you; he's a very respectable man—a watchmaker, and one of my best customers."

In a few minutes the subject of this conversation entered the room in high spirits, and called for dinner. A rump steak and oyster sauce were placed on the table, and Gray was invited to sit down and pick a bit with Gamble and the landlord. A bottle of sherry was called for.

"Now," said Gamble to the landlord, "I mean to challenge your silent friend, whose name I don't know, to take wine with me."

"I couldn't drink with him; I felt it would choke me if I did," said Gray; so I thought it best not to wait, but to bring matters to an end at once. Your name's Gamble, I think," said I.

"It is," said Gamble; "and I am not ashamed of it. Now, name for name."

"My name is Gray—Serjeant Gray of the detectives, and you must consider yourself in custody on a charge of robbing your employer, Mr. French, of watches to a large amount.

"I never saw such a strange change in any man in my life before," continued Gray. "Gamble laid down his knife and fork, and sat with the drops of perspiration rolling off his face as large as peas; he did not speak a word, but kept drinking glass after glass of wine. When he had taken about six glasses, I said,

"'I can't let you drink any more—its against rules; you must come with me to the station-house, and I must make my charge there.'"

A cab was sent for, and Gamble was soon in the station-house in Vine-street, seated between two con-

stables, who had each hold of a cuff, with strict charge to take care that he did not attempt to conceal or get rid of anything that might be about his person.

Gray then went back to Great Windmill-steeet, and found that Whall had already taken the companion into custody. Both prisoners were confronted together, but they denied all knowledge of each other. They were carefully searched, but nothing leading to their connection with the stolen property was found.

"At last," said Gray, "when I began to think we should make a bad business of it, the idea came across my mind to search their hats. I got hold of Gamble's, and pulled out the lining: there were above eighty duplicates relating to the stolen property stitched in all round, which, of course, was all the evidence we wanted. We got our men sent for trial—they were convicted, and transported. The pawnbrokers were obliged to give up the property, and were, of course, heavy losers. We made a tidy job of the business, as Mr. French behaved like a gentleman."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

SINGULAR DETECTION OF BURGLARS.

The detectives sometimes light upon information relating to an offence, contemplated or perpetrated, in a way which borders on the marvellous. One instance occurred in this locality which will serve as an apt corroboration of this statement.

Detective-serjeant Hardwick was passing through Silver-street, on his way to the Vine-street Station-house, when he passed three men who were standing together at the door of a public-house, at the corner of a stable-yard. As he went by, he heard one of the men say,

"It's no go to-night; we must put off the job."

Fancying there was something that might require his professional attention under these words, he crossed over, and watched the movements of the party unperceived. He saw them go towards the shop of a leather seller, a few doors from the public-house, look steadily up at a light which was visible at the bed-room floor, and then go back to the public-house. The next day he set on foot his inquiries, and soon ascertained that one of the persons he had seen at the door of the public-house was a relative of the landlord's; that the landlord was a respectable man, but that his relative was of bad character, and a known associate of thieves. He also traced the other two men to Short's Gardens—a place of infamous repute before the alterations by the Metropolitan Board of Works had been determined upon. Feeling now fully

persuaded that a burglary was being arranged, he went to the superintendent, Beresford, and acquainted him with his suspicions. He received permission from the superintendent to follow up the clue, and to have any assistance he might think necessary. Detective Hardwick fixed upon Police-serjeant Gray as his coadjutor, of whose skill a specimen was given in my last chapter. The constables immediately settled their plan of action. They engaged the use of a parlour which commanded a view of the public-house and, also, the premises which, it was assumed, were to be robbed, and there they kept watch, night and day. They never lost sight of the suspected places for a moment. One remained on the look-out while the other took rest, and this continued until the following Sunday, about seven o'clock in the evening. The constable Gray, who was doing the "wide-awake" business, saw the three confederates come from the public-house, proceed to the door of the shop of the leather merchant, apply a latch key, and, in a minute or two, gain an entrance.

I may as well state here that the constables had contrived to obtain a good deal of information, which they put together, and, by the light of former experience, were able to anticipate the plan of operations. The leather merchant was accustomed to pay a neighbourly visit to the public-house, and sometimes to send for change for notes to the landlord. The relative of the landlord had thus gained an insight into the domestic arrangements of the leather merchant; in particular, had ascertained that a considerable sum of money was

usually kept in the bed-room, and that on Sundays it was the custom for the leather merchant to take a ride into the country, leaving the premises unguarded until he returned, which was sometimes at a late hour at night.

The detectives rightly suspected that the money was the object of the thieves, that the time when an attempt would be made to rob the premises would be Sunday; and the sequel proved that their judgment was correct. As soon as Gray saw two of the men enter, the third remaining on the watch near the door, he woke his companion.

"Tom," said he, "they're in and doing the job. Shall we go and take 'em in the house, or wait until they come out."

"Better let 'em do all they want to do before we drop upon them," said the serjeant, and this being agreed to, the constables posted themselves in the passage of the house where they had kept watch, with the door a-jar, waiting until one or both of the burglars made their appearance. They waited about half-an-hour. The confederate on the watch, after looking up and down the street, and satisfying himself that the coast was clear, gave a short whistle, which was the signal to the thieves inside that they might come out without being seen or suspected. In a minute the door was opened, and one of the thieves made his appearance, but he had hardly set his foot on the doorstep before he was seized by Gray, dragged some distance to prevent him giving an alarm to his comrade, and then he was

told that "he was wanted." The thief turned on the constable, but was thrown down in a twinkling and secured. In a minute or two after this the second thief came out quite unsuspicious. He had a large bundle with him, and his astonishment and fear were perfectly ludicrous when he found a strong hand laid on his collar, with a quiet intimation that he had better make no noise, and come peaceably, as he was in the hands of the police. The pair were forthwith lodged in the station-house at Vine-street. They had been disappointed of their principal booty, as it turned out, singularly enough, that the money had been removed that very morning from the place in which it was usually kept, and put in a situation of more security, which they had failed to discover. Resolving, however, not to come away empty-handed, they had taken everything portable of value, and in particular a large quantity of boot-fronts, which could easily be turned into money. One of the thieves, when stripped, was found to be encased in these leather fronts, and the large bundle of the second was filled with the same kind of articles.

Having secured the two men, the constables went to the public-house and found the third, who was quite unconscious of the capture of his comrades. Gray produced a small chisel, which he had taken from one of the captured thieves, and this was immediately identified by the landlord. The chisel had been used by the thieves to force open the desks, and it was this instrument that formed a very material feature of the evidence against the third man, who, with the other

two, were tried, convicted, and transported. The constables, as a matter of course, got great credit for the adroit way in which they had managed the whole affair.

CHAPTER XXXV.

LOST AND FOUND.—THE MISSING LORD.

The bell in the magistrate's private room rang sharply one morning, and the messenger who answered the summons was told by Mr. Dyer, the sitting magistrate, to send Dewing, one of the newly-appointed officers, to him immediately. When Dewing made his appearance in the room, he found two gentlemen and an old, grey-headed livery servant there.

"Dewing," said Mr. Dyer, "these gentlemen want your assistance in tracing out the present locality of Lord ——, who left his residence at ——— some days ago, and has not been heard of since. The small clue that these gentlemen can give you appears to be very indefinite indeed; but I shall be much obliged if you will exert yourself to the utmost to serve these gentlemen, who are friends of mine, and your expenses, of course, will be paid by the family."

The officer thus selected was, fortunately, well qualified for the task. To great natural shrewdness he added the experience of many years in the police force: rising from the ranks until appointed to the post of C division Inspector, then quitting the force to take a

responsible situation in the police-court, which situation he filled for some years.

The officer went with the party to an hotel in Albemarle-street, and there he was informed that Lord ——, who had a mansion a few miles from Hounslow-heath, had left it a day or two previously, in the evening, under peculiar circumstances; and as his absence was prolonged, and he had not communicated with his family, fears were entertained for his safety. There was, evidently, a good deal of reserve in their communications evinced by the family party then located at the hotel in Albemarle-street; but as funds unlimited were placed at the disposal of the livery servant who was to accompany the officer, and as expedition was urged on the officer, there was nothing left for it but an immediate commencement. A post-chaise took officer and servant to the mansion near Hounslow. On the road the servant, who was Lord ——'s valet, and who had been confidentially employed by his master for many years, became communicative, and gave the officer the following particulars:—

His master was a nobleman of great wealth, feeble in health, and very much advanced in years. At the age of seventy-five he had married a beautiful young woman, and though thrice the age of the bride, the union might have been, if not a happy one, at least one not calling for particular remark, had it not been for an unpleasant circumstance. A neighbour, known as the "Squire," possessed a very handsome horse. Her ladyship, who was fond of riding, having met the

"Squire" several times during her equestrian exercise, was struck with admiration of his horse, and expressed a wish to have it. Lord —— immediately waited on the "Squire," and, after some bargaining, became the purchaser of the horse. As the Squire was familiar with the vices as well as the virtues of the animal, it was arranged that when Lady —— mounted her new purchase, the Squire should ride with her, give her a lesson in horsemanship, and show her the best mode of managing the animal. The arrangement proved unfortunate, and gave rise to censorious remarks. The Squire was a gay, handsome man, and as the riding excursions became very frequent, scandal, at last, grew very busy, and unpleasant whispers at length were carried to the ears of Lord ——, who being of an irascible and jealous disposition, immediately sought an interview with his wife, and a serious altercation ensued.

Having ascertained that her ladyship had met the Squire the following day, after a prohibition against future meetings had been given, Lord —— was nowhere to be found when the seven o'clock dinner-hour arrived. None of the servants could tell where their master had gone. The lodge-keeper recollected seeing his lordship pass through the gate about dusk with a small travelling bag in his hand. This was all the intelligence that could be collected, and as two days passed without any tidings being heard from him, the members of his family were summoned, and the whole circumstances communicated to them. As Lord ——

was very infirm, and his warm temper well known, vague fears began to be entertained, and the result was a visit to the metropolis, and a consultation with Mr. Dyer, who was personally acquainted with the family.

His lordship's valet told the officer that, although he could not acquit her ladyship of imprudence, yet he did not believe that anything seriously wrong had occurred and he felt satisfied, if he could only see his master, he would be able to induce him to return to his family.

When Dewing arrived at his lordship's residence he found everything, as might be expected, in confusion. Her ladyship could not, or would not, be seen, and no one was able to give the least clue to their master's movements. Dewing ascertained that, on the day when his lordship was last seen, angry words had passed with her ladyship. His lordship had then dressed himself without the aid of his valet, had taken a large sum of money in bank notes—£1,500 was the amount—from his escritoire, and had left the grounds in the way described. Dewing obtained as many particulars as he could collect, and, among other things, was told by the housekeeper that her master was very particular respecting his morning meal; that he would have nothing but green tea, and only thin bread and butter, for breakfast; and that he required each slice of bread and butter to be covered with a second thin slice of dry bread. With these scanty particulars Dewing and the old valet set out on their search.

Inquiries were made at all the inns in the neighbourhood, but no tidings of the fugitive could be

collected. Having ascertained that the Reading coach passed down the road about the hour that his lordship left the house, Dewing resolved to make inquiries in that direction. A post-chaise soon took them to Reading, but search throughout the town was, for some time, fruitless. At one of the small inns, however, the chambermaid recollected that an elderly gentleman had come into the house by the back entrance, and had had tea and a bed there a night or two back, leaving by the Oxford coach the next morning. Dewing questioned the chambermaid particularly, and elicited that she recollected the old gentleman because he had given such odd directions about his tea, having ordered only green tea to be put in the tea-pot, and the bread and butter to be cut in a particular manner, each slice of bread and butter being accompanied by a thin slice of dry bread. This, at last, appeared to afford some clue, and Dewing and the valet set off to Oxford. Here the clue again failed—no one answering at all the outward description of his lordship having put up at any of the inns.

Dewing, however, was not disposed to give up the pursuit until he had exhausted inquiries. Fancying that his lordship might have changed his clothes in order to elude detection with greater certainty, he inquired at the various ready-made clothes shops, and at last ascertained that an elderly gentleman had gone into one shop, had bought a complete suit of clothes, had put them on in the shop, and had left his own garments behind. The valet, on seeing these clothes,

immediately identified them as belonging to his master. From the description of the dress then worn by Lord —— Dewing very soon ascertained that an old gentleman, dressed in clothes answering to the purchaser at the tailor's, had taken the coach on to Birmingham. Another post-chaise was immediately ordered, and the officer and valet started off in pursuit. When arrived at Birmingham Dewing's first inquiry was for the coachman who drove the coach. The coachman was unwell, and had gone to his own home, which was some miles from Birmingham. Dewing set off to the address, and found the coachman in bed. The coachman remembered taking up an old gentleman at Reading, and setting him down at the Royal Hotel in Birmingham. This was all the information he could give.

Birmingham was again visited, and inquiries made at the Royal Hotel. Here the clue was again lost, the waiters there being able to say nothing more than that an old gentleman, who got down at the hotel, had a little refreshment, and then went away. The most careful inquiries first at all the leading hotels, then at the smaller taverns, failed to afford any assistance in their object. The officer and the valet resolved to stay the night in the town, and resume their search the next day. They chose one of the commercial inns located in a quiet street, and proceeded to make themselves comfortable for the remainder of the evening, The officer had occasion to step into the coffee-room just before going to bed, when his attention was attracted by the conversation of a couple of commercial travellers who

were enjoying their grog and cigar together. They were talking of some person who had, about an hour before, entered the coffee-room, ordered supper and a bed, and who after reading the paper, and eating his frugal meal, had retired. One of the travellers having occasion to refer to the newspaper, took up the journal the new guest had been reading, and to his utter astonishment found wrapped up in it a roll of bank notes in value £1,500. While in the act of counting the money, the new guest came into the room, and in the politest manner announced that he was the owner of the notes, and had left them in the paper by accident. Of course there could be no doubt about ownership, and the notes were handed to him with a recommendation to be more careful in future of such valuable property.

"Precious lucky I looked at the paper," said the commercial. "But only think of the indifference with which the old gentleman shoved the money into his waistcoat pocket. I wonder who he can be. Let us ask Boots."

Boots was summoned; but all he could say was, that "the old gent warn't a commercial, for he'd no samples, and had booked an inside place for Liverpool by the early coach."

Dewing feeling convinced that the "old gent" was the party of whom he was in quest, called the chambermaid into counsel, without, however, letting her into the secret too completely; and as the "old gent" had gone to bed, and locked his bedroom door, the chambermaid could not venture to disturb him, but promised to

arrange matters so that the officer and the valet should have a full view of him as he passed from his bed-chamber to the coffee-room the next morning, breakfast having been ordered at eight o'clock. Dewing being satisfied that the bird—perhaps the real one—was caged, and could not escape, arranged the plan of operation. Next morning the officer and the valet planted themselves at the window which overlooked the yard leading from the bedrooms to the coffee-room, and precisely at eight o'clock an old gentleman, very feeble, crossed the yard, and went into the coffee-room. The valet whispered to Dewing,

"That's him!"

After a little consultation it was agreed to let Lord —— have his breakfast first, as it might seriously affect his ailing constitution, if too suddenly accosted. Breakfast being finished, Lord —— directed that a sheet of writing-paper should be taken into his bedroom. Having made his way back into the bedroom, the valet, after a short interval, knocked at the door.

"Come in!" said his lordship.

The old valet opened the door, and stood by the table at which Lord —— was seated, busily engaged in writing a letter. Lord —— suddenly looked up, and caught sight of his valet's face.

"Oh! John," he exclaimed, "is that you? Why, what brought you here?"

"Oh! my dear master," said John, the tears running down his cheeks, "what brought you here? I've been looking everywhere for you since Wednesday, and

now I've found you I want to take you home with me."

"No, John," said Lord ——, "I can't return."

"Pray, pray, my dear master! come back. My lady is breaking her heart at your absence."

"That must be a mistake, John! Your lady more likely is rejoiced at finding herself at liberty to follow her improper inclinations."

"My dear master, don't say so; my lady has only been giddy, nothing more. She is crying her eyes out at your absence."

"Well, John, if I could feel assured your lady really felt any regret at my absence, that would, perhaps, alter my views materially. I had pretty well made up my mind to take ship at Liverpool, and go on the continent."

"My dear master, you must go back; I can't leave you; I am sent here after you by your family, and I've got a London officer with me."

"What? an officer! have they dared to disgrace me by sending a police-officer to take me into custody?"

Dewing, who was outside, and who heard what passed, here presented himself before Lord ——, and in a delicate way pointed out the duty that devolved upon him, and his desire to discharge it in such a way as would not prove offensive to his lordship, or give the least hint to others of his instructions or his office. Lord ——, after some further persuasion, being evidently moved by the strong protestations on the part of the valet about Lady ——'s distress at the flight of her

lord, eventually consented to go back, and, a post-chaise having been ordered, all parties took their way to ——, and reached there the same evening. The officer was dismissed with a handsome gratuity for the tact and good feeling he had displayed.

And perhaps it may be satisfactory to state that explanations having been entered upon on both sides, Lord —— abandoned his jealous suspicions, and Lady —— gave up her injudicious morning rides.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

LADY SHOPLIFTERS.

Some years ago charges of shoplifting against persons in good circumstances—sometimes even in the higher ranks of life—were not unfrequent. The public seldom hear anything about such cases now-a-days. I will not pretend to account for the change by either assuming that the age has improved in honesty, or that shop-keepers are more willing to compound this kind of small felonies, in consequence of having taken warning from the loss of custom by fellow-tradesmen who have ventured to bring to justice pilferers holding the position of upper class offenders whom they have detected pilfering; but such, undoubtedly, is the fact.

The disposition — sometimes uncontrollable — to pilfer, when a convenient opportunity presents itself, is much more widely developed than people would imagine. The records of police courts, and the recol-

lections of some of the old officers, would furnish a catalogue of culprits, the majority young ladies of good position, and sometimes of large fortune, that would prove quite startling. Where shopkeepers—principally lace and toy merchants, and jewellers—on detecting a pilferer, have called in an officer, it has been before they were acquainted with the rank of the offender. Very few tradesmen have had the courage to go on with prosecutions where the friends of the accused moved in the higher circles; now and then, it must be in fairness admitted, justice was followed up and done, even at the expense of withdrawal of custom and diminution of business.

The remarkable case at Crockford's Bazaar, St. James's-street, in which a young lady of distinguished family was given into custody for stealing from various stalls, had something to do with the failure of that once promising establishment. As soon as it became known that a young *lady* had been sent to Marlborough-street police court on a charge of shoplifting the same as any common thief, there was a general avoidance of the bazaar by the higher classes of purchasers, and the bazaar did not continue open very many years after this occurrence. The case in question excited a good deal of attention and comment at the time. The young lady had been suspected for some time; one day she was closely watched, and sufficient proof having been obtained of her guilt, she was requested to walk into the matron's room, and when there was searched. About half-a-dozen trifling articles — pin-cushions,

needle cases, a thimble, an ivory-cutter, &c.—pilfered from different stalls, were found in her possession. She was taken in her father's carriage—the family were of title, and resided at Sheen—to the police-court before Mr. Dyer, whose aristocratic sympathies were enlisted at once in her favour, as far as, at least, as was consistent with the obvious requirements of justice. The press took the matter up, and it was with the utmost difficulty that the family, by the exercise of official power, were able to obtain the discharge from custody of their child, and to enable her to avoid the ignominy of a public trial in a court of justice. The public grumbled a little through the press, at the turn the affair had taken; but the dissatisfaction at the release of the accused became a "nine days' wonder," and then the whole affair dropped out of observation.

I remember another instance which occurred in reference to a titled lady's jewel robbery in Mayfair. It was for a long time believed that the robbery was "put up"—that is, planned by regular thieves, and carried out through the agency of some one belonging to the family establishment. The loss was all the more remarkable, as it called for the notice and sympathy of Majesty itself. Clements, however, got an unexpected clue to the thief, and, one day, the magistrate's private room presented a curious scene. A young nobleman was on his knees before his lady relative, confessing the theft, and consenting to banish himself from England for a prescribed period, in consideration of not being prosecuted.

It is difficult to account for the propensity towards small thefts which some people exhibit. Poverty is believed to be the main cause of dishonesty; but in the cases to which I particularly refer, there was no possible pretence for setting up such an excuse. The pilferers were persons of fortune—frequently of rank. In certain families of distinction, this idiosyncrasy—it can hardly be called "dishonesty"—is notorious and ineradicable. The daughters of a peer, once the representative of royalty, hardly ever visited a shop without carrying away some article. This propensity was so well known that no notice was ever taken by the shopkeepers, beyond that of ascertaining the quantity and value of the articles concealed, and sending in the bill to the father the next morning. The bills were invariably paid.

Another remarkable instance was of a lady of title, not very long ago deceased. The office messenger, who had been footman to the nobleman who procured him his police appointment, related this story to me himself. His master had been employed on an important diplomatic mission to Russia, and, among other substantial marks of royal favour, was presented with a superb pair of diamond buckles from the jewel case of the monarch himself. These costly ornaments were only worn on state occasions, and only shown to favoured visitors. A stone in one of the buckles having fallen out from defective setting, Lord —— took the buckle to Storr's, and gave special directions that another stone should be supplied to match in water and value the other stones.

"There will not be the least difficulty about that," said Mr. Storr, smiling, "for we fitted up this very buckle according to Lady ——'s directions a short time ago, and we have paste diamonds enough left to supply another buckle in case it should be required."

"I think," said his lordship, earnestly, "you must be mistaken in this instance. This buckle came from the Emperor of Russia. These stones are brilliants of the very first water, and were a gift to me from his Majesty the Emperor of Russia himself."

"The original stones were very fine indeed," said Mr. Storr, "but they were removed by direction of Lady ——, who brought this buckle here not very long ago, and had French composition diamonds substituted."

"And what became of the original diamonds?"

"I received instructions to set them in the form of an Irish harp for Lady ——'s own wearing."

"You have them in your possession still?"

"Oh, yes! the job is just going to be put in hand."

"Then be good enough to let this matter rest until you hear further from me," said his lordship.

An inquiry was set on foot among his servants by Lord ——, and it then transpired that Lady ——, who had been on a visit for a few days, had free access to his lordship's cabinet, and by this means had no doubt possessed herself of one of the buckles long enough for her purpose before she restored it. A note was at once despatched to Lady ——, the contents of which can only be guessed from the circumstance of Lady —— immediately calling at Messrs. Storr to say she had

changed her mind; she would not have the Irish harp, and that the original diamonds might again take the place of their French substitutes in the buckle. This story got wind, and this little matter was added to a number of other eccentric appropriations laid at the door of her ladyship.

A perfumer in Bond-street mentioned to me a *ruse* devised by him, which combined the serious with the ludicrous. In order to test the honesty of his customers, most of whom were carriage folks, he caused a half-sovereign to be fixed on the *under* side of the glass cover of a case which stood on the counter; this gave the half-sovereign the appearance of lying *outside* the case, as if some one had left it there and had forgotten it. It was perfectly ludicrous, he said, to see the attempts made by ladies to possess themselves of this little coin. Some would claim it boldly, declaring it had just dropped from their purse, but would draw back in dismay when they became aware of the trick. Others, as soon as they caught sight of it, would sidle up to the place, and make the most cunning efforts to conceal their purpose of pocketing it. Some would throw their muff, others their handkerchiefs, parasol, or gloves, over the half-sovereign, and then, under pretence of looking into the case, slip their hands beneath the covering towards the piece of money, and, not being able to lay hold of it, would exhibit the most comical confusion. The perfumer told me he found the joke, at last, too expensive. Some of his regular customers, who had been baffled, kept away from his shop, and prudence, therefore, obliged

him to abandon his "test," as he termed it, but he learned enough to satisfy him that petty larceny in the human constitution was not always confined to the needy or lower ranks of life.

A case of a more serious complexion soon afterwards occurred. A job carriage drove up to the office door one day, an elderly lady was handed out by Plank, the chief officer, and introduced into court. It was soon whispered that the lady had been detected in a petty theft at the shop of Mr. Heathcoat, a lace merchant in Oxford-street. The lady was deeply agitated, and, as she begged for a short respite, in order to send for a professional man, the case was put back for a couple of hours. The only professional at hand was James Isaacs, one of those pseudo lawyers who, though not on the rolls, was suffered to practise in police-courts in the character of clerk to a certain attorney who allowed his name to be used, and who received a percentage on all business done. "Jim Isaacs," as he was familiarly termed, being regarded one of the most respectable of this class, was allowed to receive his instructions from the lady. The case, however, was too serious for his management, so he posted off to his principal in St. Mary Axe, and soon appeared with him in court.

It turned out that the lady had been detected in secreting a card of lace edging; the value of the paltry article was not more than five shillings—but, as she had paid several previous visits to the shop, and small articles, such as a pair of lace cuffs, a collar, and a lace fall, had been missed, when she next made her appearance she

was closely watched, and, being seen to slip the card of edging into her pocket, an officer was sent for. She was given into custody, and the goods were found in her possession when searched. In addition to a purse well filled with bank notes, East Indian Bonds of the value of £11,000 were found in her pocket.

The lawyer, who was called in, persuaded the old lady, whose name was Elizabeth Collins, to make over the bonds and money to him, assuring her that when he got her off he would return the property—should, however, he fail in doing this, and should conviction ensue, by the arrangement he suggested the forfeiture of the property to the Crown would be prevented. Under a promise of receiving back her property whatever might happen she was induced to make the transfer. It need hardly be stated that the attorney made no serious efforts about the old lady's defence. The case being clear, she was committed for trial. Contrary to the expectations she was led to entertain, she was tried, convicted, and sentenced to a term of imprisonment. I asked Isaacs what became of the property.

"That I can't tell you," said he, shaking his head knowingly, "but this I can say, she never got back a mag."

"Do you mean to say that the lawyer kept the whole of the money?"

"I mean to say it was a rascally business, that somebody got it, but not the old lady. I was sorry for it; I tried all I could to get her an annuity, as promised, but I know she never got anything, and she died soon afterwards broken-hearted."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE EAST-END BULLOCK-HUNTERS.

One morning the Marlborough-street magistrates instructed Plank to send a detachment of officers to assist the Lambeth-street magistrates in putting down a weekly nuisance that had grown to the dimensions of a public scandal, and was known at the east-end as "bullock hunting."

It was the practice of a body of Spitalfields weavers from Bethnal-green, aided by a gang of the lowest and most desperate class of ruffians from Ratcliff-highway and Whitechapel, to detach a bullock from the herds that made their way to Smithfield-market every Monday morning, to goad the animal into partial madness, and then to hunt it through the most public thoroughfares at the east-end of the town, keeping the inhabitants, and particularly the shopkeepers, in a state of terror and alarm throughout the day. People were indiscriminately knocked down and robbed openly, and shops were invaded and plundered by the thieves, who formed the largest and the worst part of the mob.

The evil had grown to such a pitch that formal complaints were made to the Home-office, and the result was that the east-end magistrates—in particular those connected with the Lambeth and Worship-street Police-courts—were directed to take prompt and decided measures for the immediate suppression of this most dangerous nuisance. The magistrates, after meeting in

conclave, came to the resolution to get together such a force as should strike terror into the evil doers, in addition to effecting the capture, if possible, of the ringleaders, who were to be made examples of, as a warning to others who periodically joined in this scandalous outrage, merely from the day being an idle day, and from love of mischief. From each police-court four or five of the most resolute officers were selected; they were armed with heavy staves and with cutlasses, their orders being to use the latter only in case of actual necessity.

The four officers from Marlborough-street were, I think, Clements, Schofield, Avis, and Valentine. I accompanied them, as I was curious to see the result. About seven o'clock in the morning of Monday (this was more than thirty years ago) a formidable body of constables was quietly got together, in front of the Lambeth Police-court, and placed under the orders of its chief officers and of those of Worship-street. There were about thirty officers and street-keepers, a force considered sufficiently strong to inflict chastisement on the ruffians, and to capture the principal offenders.

A scout very soon brought the information that a bullock had been driven into White Lion-street, that the usual materials of a Spitalfields' mob were hard at work goading the animal into temporary madness, and that a body of thieves from Wentworth-street were waiting until the animal was hunted into Whitechapel to commence their work of plunder.

The constables arranged themselves into three bodies

of ten each—one, at a given signal, to issue from Worship-street; the second from Lambeth-street, near the church; and the third to come down from Aldgate, thus, as it were, enclosing the rioters on all sides.

As soon as the constables had made their arrangements, and were debouching into the street, I followed one body at a safe distance, for I knew it was a service of danger, and was quite aware that if caught in the mob I might possibly have to give a very bad account of my adventure. I was soon made aware of the proximity of the bullock-hunters by the yells, shouts, and storm of brickbats and other missiles that were wantonly pelted in every direction. I sheltered myself in a public-house opposite to Whitechapel Church, and from the first-floor had a tolerable view of the whole proceedings. It is impossible to describe the scene that presented itself, nor would it be credited by those who have never seen what an English mob of the lower orders is composed of, and what atrocities it is capable of committing. In a few minutes the maddened bullock came rushing down White Lion-street towards Whitechapel, hunted by hundreds of ruffians, and making frantic attempts sometimes to find shelter from the blows and missiles showered on it from all sides, and sometimes to retaliate on its savage pursuers. But in the height of this wild and ferocious scene, when unwary passengers were flying in terror on all sides, a diversion was suddenly created. The officers, sallying forth, suddenly backed in among the mob, and drawing their staves, began striking right and left. In a minute

twenty or thirty of the bullock-drivers were stretched on the pavement and in the road powerless, and as the same process on the part of another section of the officers was going on at the other end of the street, the mob, panic-struck, came to a sudden pause, and in the belief that they were attacked by the whole force of police and Bow-street runners, they fled in all directions. The officers did their work effectually, they kept well together, and threw themselves into the thickest part of the fugitives, knocking them down on all sides. The screams, oaths, and yells were fearful. Some of the most resolute of the ruffians, arming themselves with brickbats and bludgeons, made a stand, and a regular hand-to-hand fight took place. The officers would in the end have been worsted had they not drawn their cutlasses from beneath their long coats, and made a regular charge at their opponents. This decided the affray; the ruffians fled like so many sheep, leaving behind two or three score with broken heads, and about fifty in custody. In five minutes the rioters were seen rushing wildly down the side streets, some covered with blood, others carried off by their companions, having sustained dangerous injuries. The lesson thus inflicted served its purpose well. That day was the last on which bullock hunting took place, and from that day the inhabitants of the East-end have been relieved from an infliction of which many alive will have a lively recollection.

The officers did not escape entirely scatheless. Several were badly hurt by missiles, and one or two,

who had ventured rather too rashly among the rioters, being cut off from support, were "served out" before assistance could arrive. Two of the Marlborough-street constables had apparently fared the worst—Avis and Valentine. They did not make their appearance at the "Marlborough Head" rendezvous until late in the evening, and when they did their visages bore ample proofs of the injuries they had sustained. Valentine had his cheek laid open and his head deeply cut in several places, Avis had his front teeth knocked out, and almost every feature beaten out of human shape.

It appeared, from their own story, that in rushing after the mob they got down a blind alley, and very soon found that they had to fight their way back to their brother officers. This was not an easy task, for the only practicable egress was hemmed in by a furious gang, who speedily became aware how matters stood, and who determined to inflict summary vengeance on the "Red-breasts," as the old Bow-street officers were called. The two officers sheltered themselves in a doorway, and with their cutlasses, kept off the mob, but could not screen themselves from stones and other missiles that were hurled at them. They were knocked down several times, but as they stood to each other manfully, one assisting the other, they made a pretty good fight of it, and prevented the mob from closing on them.

"I can promise you," said Avis, "it was blessed warm work while it lasted, and I thought at one time it was all up with both of us, when my lash was broken

by a brickbat, and I was downed by a paving-stone, which knocked out three of my front grinders. I can tell you when I got on my legs again I was precious wild, so I borrows Val's lash just to have a "go" in at 'em with the back of it. Soon as ever they saw the steel the lot gave way, and we made a rush and managed to scramble out somehow and to join the Worship-street lads, who were slipping into the Bullockers like one o'clock."

"You gave them the *back* of the lash? eh!" said Valentine, looking hard at Avis.

"That's all, old fellow," replied Avis, "you see I didn't want to get into trouble, and so I wouldn't use either pint or edge."

"Hem!" said Valentine, "I picked up a man's ear, but I s'pose that dropped off in the hurry of running away."

"Can't say anything about that," said Avis, undauntedly, "I used the back only; if I'd a chopped any on 'em the edge of your lash would have shown it."

"There was a trifle of blood on the edge," said Valentine, significantly.

"It might have come from your nose," replied Avis; "but let's say no more about it. If any gentleman in the crowd lost his ear and you picked it up, you can tell him where to come and get it again."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

FAREWELL CHAPTER.

In making these "extracts" from my "*Private* Note-book," I have been guided by the desire rather to amuse than to astonish. I need not say that I could have selected cases of a "sensation" character which have never yet come before the public. There are classes of police charges that never can or ought to meet the public eye; these would, no doubt, have been found more acceptable to prurient tastes; but I have carefully abstained from indicating them, and in the selection I have made I trust I have escaped giving reasonable offence to any one.

The higher and more occult duties of police-officers I have not touched upon. I speak of duties connected with such matters as watching foreigners who have taken refuge in this country, transmitting information of their movements and associates to foreign powers, and thus assisting either to detect or prevent the concoction of conspiracies which had for their object the replacement of an old dynasty, or the establishment of a new one. It is true we have not such a *national* system of police *surveillance* as is to be found in France, Austria, Prussia, and Russia; but we have an organization in Scotland-yard that bears no very distant resemblance to it. It is understood there is no difficulty, after making application to the higher authorities, for a foreign potentate to obtain permission to send over his own spies, or

to obtain the assistance of a police-officer here to fulfil that honourable employment. I have just now more than one bill of expenses before me, sent in by police-officers—expenses incurred by them in their official appointment as foreign spies. It would, perhaps, rather surprise the present Emperor of the French to know that more than one English police-officer was in French pay for the purpose of keeping a constant watch on his doings. When the Bordeaux refugees — Marrast, Cavaignac, Thomas, and others, who afterwards played so marked a part in the revolution which dethroned Louis Philippe—were located in London, a constant *espionage* by French and English agencies was kept up. An amnesty, however, put an end to this latter service, and the result of readmitting these *mauvais sujets* into France is a matter of history. Louis Philippe and his adherents, in their turn, became subjected to similar *espionage*, and several of our most renowned old officers benefitted largely thereby in a pecuniary sense. The late Bow-street officer, Ruthven, enjoyed pensions from more than one foreign power. Leadbitter was pensioned by France, and was long in coöperation with the French police. The two Forresters were also largely employed in this kind of foreign secret service.

But perhaps the most onerous part of the duties of special officers was the task of tracing out the writers of threatening letters to members of the government for the time being. Very few ministers can say that they have not been favoured with warnings of this sort; and the well-known case of the assassination of Mr. Drum-

mond, mistaken for Sir R. Peel, will serve to prove that such threats are not of a visionary character, or wholly to be disregarded. I may, in a subsequent series of extracts, make a few disclosures that will possibly not prove uninteresting.

The present series relates to my experience as "reporter;" my experience as "editor"—of a graver character of course—shall be at the service of the public, provided the reception these trifles meet is such as to warrant their publication.

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